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ABSTRACT

This is the third and final year-end report on the START program in Alberta (Canada). START was a dropout prevention project funded by Alberta Education and Alberta/NWT Region Human Resources Development Canada, successor to Employment and Immigration Canada. START addressed dropout prevention through a variety of school and community initiatives targeting students in the junior high school years. Nine case studies, some of which include more than one school, are presented in a format that provides: (1) rationale of the project; (2) background factors; (3) background characteristics of students; (4) interventions; and (5) outcomes, including student achievement data and an overall look at project accomplishments. Overall program impact was seen to be favorable, although it was difficult to make comparisons across programs because of the great diversity of student characteristics. An appendix presents reporting forms used in the evaluation. (Contains 3 figures, 68 tables, and 6 references.) (SLD)

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Evaluation of Alberta START Projects Case Studies

Final Report

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Submitted:
November 7, 1994

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Nyberg Consultants Ltd.

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Policy and Planning Branch, Alberta Education

and

Programs Branch, Alberta/NWT Region Human Resources Development Canada
(formerly Employment and Immigration Canada)

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SPECIAL NOTE

The views expressed in this report are those of the researchers and not necessarily those of Employment and Immigration Canada or those of Alberta Education.

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The evaluation of the Alberta START projects was carried out under the direction of a steering committee consisting of:

Ann Harvey, Alberta Education Policy and Planning (Co-chair)
Al Cunningham, Employment and Immigration Canada (Co-chair)
Pat Anderson, Employment and Immigration Canada
Jenny Bain, Alberta Career Development and Employment
Phil Boyle, Alberta Education
Murielle St. Arnault-Christenson, Employment and Immigration Canada

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Administrators, caregivers and other staff members involved in the START projects regularly compiled and forwarded data, without which the evaluation could not have been conducted. The efforts and friendly cooperation extended by these people are gratefully acknowledged.

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Introduction

This is the third and final Year-end Report on the START Program and is similar to the first and second reports produced in 1992 and 1993. Funding for the various projects ended, as scheduled, at the end of March, 1994; however, all of the schools agreed to provide year-end data needed to complete a report based on the results of the full 1993-94 school year. Information on the full year was necessary so that valid comparisons could be made over the three-year duration of the project.

The same general format is used to portray each of the projects; however, there are minor variations to accommodate the differences among the projects. For each project the schools are named and the START personnel identified, after which detailed descriptions are given under five broad headings, as follows:

1. Rationale

   Each school or jurisdiction included a statement of rationale with the original proposal. This outlined such factors as the special problem that existed, goals of the project, the method of attack, and which students would be served.

2. Background Factors

   This section detailed any special features of the school, of the students, of the staff, or of the instructional methods that existed.

3. Background Characteristics of Pupils

   A detailed description of the students selected for inclusion in the START project is provided in this section. The focus is generally on home background and history of attendance, of academic progress, and of personal problems.

4. Interventions

   The special procedures employed with the START students are outlined here, along with details of duties provided by special personnel.

5. Outcomes

   Insofar as possible, hard data are provided here on such pertinent information as attendance, dropouts, transfers, and achievement.

In 1993-94, 7 of the 9 jurisdictions originally in the project remained, and in the 7 jurisdictions 14 schools were served. These

are named below:

Calgary School District No. 19. - 3 schools, 3 separate projects
- Louise Dean
- Clarence Sansom
- Shaughnessy

Lethbridge School District No. 51 - 4 schools, 1 project
- Allan Watson
- Gilbert Paterson
- Hamilton
- Wilson

Fort Vermilion School Division No. 52 - 1 school, 1 project
- High Level

Lakeland R.C. Separate School District No.150 - 1 school, 1 project
- Assumption (Grand Centre)

Life Values School for Effective Education - 1 school, 1 project

County of Smoky Lake No. 13 - 3 schools, 1 project
- H.A. Kosash (Smoky Lake)
- Vilna
- Waskatenau

Edmonton R.C. Separate School District No. 7 - 1 school, 1 project
- Based at the YMCA

Project directors were required to submit mid-year reports which provided enrolments by grade (including names of students), and descriptions of the components that comprised the interventions. They were also required to submit answer sheets related to the Culture Free Self Esteem Inventory (CFSEI) which was administered to all students (with some exceptions, where testing was deemed inappropriate) in the fall of 1993. After the end of March, 1994, they were instructed to forward CFSEI answer sheets resulting from testing conducted in late March. At year end, directors submitted final reports giving updates on enrolments and interventions (including a success rating, with 5 being the highest score), attendance data, and follow-up information on the 1992-93 START students. Forms used are shown in Appendix 1. Four schools forwarded achievement data; three used a pre- and post-test procedure involving a standardized test and another used summary data on achievement as students worked through a Computer Assisted Instruction program. For one school (Shaughnessy) there was a comparison group, for which data corresponding to those for START students were forwarded.

In 1993-94 report card marks (which were required in 1992-93) were not requested, nor were student questionnaires and School Subjects Attitude Scales (SSAS) used in the first two years. Also

discontinued was information on the extent of the education of the parents, and reasons for placing students into the START program, because it was assumed that the patterns revealed in the first two years would be continued.

This report is the final one, therefore, it was felt that there should be information and comments on the effects of START over the three year's duration of the program in addition to the usual information that applied strictly to the 1993-94 school year. Hard data included attendance figures, transfer and dropout information, and achievement figures, where appropriate. Results of the CFSEI testing are not given in this report, rather they are included in the *Provincial Perspectives Report,* a companion report which provides a provincial overview of the START program.

A member of the evaluation team visited each site where a START project was in place at least twice during 1993-94. In addition, contact was maintained through extra visits or telephone conversations. All of the projects operated smoothly during the year except for a few problems that developed when the funding was discontinued at the end of March, 1994.

Organization of the report was based on the *Countenance Model* (Stake, 1967), as were the two previous year-end reports. For a description of this model please refer to previous reports on the START project.

Calgary School District No. 19

School: Shaughnessy High School

Personnel: Byron Lambe, Principal
Murray Bialek, Computer Assisted Instruction Director
Yvonne Bridgett, Social Worker, funded by START

Arrangements: The Social Worker's salary and lease of a computer system were funded by START.
Administration, Resource Teachers, Counselling, CAI Teacher, etc., were provided by the school

Name of Project: Project Plus

Rationale

Depending on the characteristics of the pupil being served, one or more of the following were considered as imperatives in dealing with the project pupils: individualization in instruction and counselling; contacts with home, parents, and outside agencies; and management of anger, stress, goal establishment and physical well-being.

Background Factors

The Shaughnessy school was focused entirely on the 5 percent or so of the teen population placed in the Integrated Occupational Program (IOP) because of inability or reluctance to cope with the regular academic routes. Staff, administration, and specialists tended to have been self-selected and dedicated to serving this type of youngster.

The Computer Assisted Instruction (CAI) program used courseware from the Computer Curriculum Corporation in Mathematics, Reading, and Writing. In the final year, bridging programs and courses in other subjects were added. The twenty computers used in the project were leased. These CAI resources were provided from the Project START funds and the remainder of the project money provided for the services of a full-time Social Worker. The CAI Director, the counsellor, the subject teachers, and the administrators provided instruction and support in their respective areas. For these last-named people no START project funds were used.

Background Characteristics of Pupils

Table 1.1 records that 65 pupils were selected for Project START service during the fall term of 1993-94. More than one-third of these were registered in each of Grades 10 and 11 and 30.7 percent in Grade 12. Seventy-two percent (47) were in the Continuing START group (they were project members last year) and 27.7 percent were

newly enroled in 1993-94. Grade 8 instruction was discontinued last year, and Grade 9 for 1993-94 as a continuation of the District policy to phase out the operation of IOP schools, at least at the Junior High School level.

As in previous years, Shaughnessy High School selected a comparison group very similar in overall average attendance behaviour to the START Project members. Table 1.1 indicates that, at an overall average of 90.1 percent, the attendance for the comparison group closely matched the 89.9 percent for the Project group. There were fewer "continuing" students in the comparison group owing to the higher rates, last year, of dropping out and transferring.

Table 1.1 - Enrolment and Baseline Years' Attendance

Grade		Group	Enrolment No.	Enrolment %	Baseline Years' Attendance* No.	Baseline Years' Attendance* %	Baseline Years' Attendance* No Data**
START	10	Continuing	15	23.1	13	91.8	2
		New	8	12.3	5	88.0	3
START	11	Continuing	18	27.7	15	91.1	3
		New	4	6.2	3	96.3	1
START	12	Continuing	14	21.5	11	89.1	3
		New	6	9.2	5	80.8	1
START	10-12	Continuing	47	72.3	39	90.8	8
		New	18	27.7	13	87.1	5
START	10-12	All	65	100	52	89.9	13
Comparison	10	Continuing	6	10.7	2	93.5	4
		New	14	25.0	6	93.2	8
Comparison	11	Continuing	9	16.1	7	88.7	2
		New	13	23.2	11	87.7	2
Comparison	12	Continuing	10	17.8	8	95.6	2
		New	4	7.1	3	78.7	1
Comparison	10-12	Continuing	25	44.6	17	92.5	8
		New	31	55.3	20	88.0	11
Comparison	10-12	All	56	100	37	90.1	19

* Baseline year is 1992-93 for "New" students, and 1991-92 or earlier for "Continuing" students.
** The "No Data" column gives the number of students whose baseline attendance was not available. In the Outcomes section these numbers increase due to dropouts and transfers and the averages are changed accordingly.

External Consultants' Comments About Background Factors

Since Shaughnessy was an Integrated Occupational Program (IOP) school, selection had already taken place to populate it with relatively high-risk pupils. The school had applied numerous criteria in making selections for Project START. The choices were

appropriate and the pupils identified as members were at relatively high risk for dropping out. Since it had a large pool from which to select, a comparison group was chosen which was likely at equally high risk for leaving school.

The inputs provided for the project were altered significantly during 1993-94. During that year the Social Worker was employed until the end of January. She provided excellent service in the professional areas and assumed extra tasks in the areas of record keeping and reporting. For the latter the CAI program and the CAI Director also contributed. During 1993-94 the three IOP teachers responsible for instruction of the core academic subjects for the START Project pupils in Grades 10, 11, and 12 assumed major responsibility for the day-to-day implementation of the CAI program. As will be noted in the Outcomes section, the reduced service of the Social Worker and the elimination of services by the CAI Director had a deleterious effect on the results.

Interventions

As noted in the Background section, the START project funded components at Shaughnessy included the full-time Social Worker, computer courseware, and lease of computers. The school discontinued providing the services of the CAI teacher assigned to the project but continued with the regular teaching staff and administrative support. The following reports on project components are based on accounts submitted by the social worker and CAI Director. Table 1.2 lists the project components commented upon and rated by these two people.

Components (as reported by the Social Worker)

Social Work with CBE Staff (Case/Team Updates)

Number served - 49

Success rating - 5

This component focused on the liaison role of the Social Worker. Updating of information allowed the team members to be constantly aware of any individual issues and concerns which could be affecting school performance. This allowed sharing of any current issues identified by parents, staff or students themselves. It was effective in keeping on top of any issues for the students as they occurred in the classroom.

Individual Ongoing Contact (Parents)

Number served - 21

Success rating - 4

One of the goals of this program was communication between the school and the parents, on a positive level wherever possible to keep them more actively involved and informed. Parents were encouraged to provide some positive feedback to the student at home. The difficulty with this intervention was the time available for making these contacts on a regular basis (owing to the large number of project students). The greatest effectiveness occurred when parents could be contacted immediately when a problem arose for the student at school.

Young Mothers Group

Number served - 5

Success rating - 4

This group was organized, in January, 1994, with the assistance of the School Health Nurse as Co-leader. The focus was on both START and regular students who were returning to school as single parents. The group met one morning per week for 2 hours. The group was a forum to discuss issues and difficulties in filling the role of student and parent. It was also used to provide information and skill building to cope with these pressures and remain in school.

Individual Ongoing Contact (Students)

Number served - 21

Success rating - 5

This component used counselling or simply extra support for the student in dealing with specific problems. Issues and problems could be dealt with as soon as they appeared. Assistance was given in goal setting and problem solving.

School-Community Contacts (Information and Referral)

Number served - 18

Success rating - 5

This component focused on the liaison role of the Social Work position in providing information and referral if necessary, for students and/or their families. Other duties included attending community meetings which focused on services which could be beneficial to students, staff, and families. The service was used regularly in assessing help in counselling and financial support.

Stress Management (Group Work)

Number served - 17

Success rating 4

This intervention focused on the Grade 11 class and was conducted once a week. The emphasis was on the student learning and practicing skills related to the management of various forms of stress. The class was conducted in the classroom setting and was co-led by the classroom teacher. It was identified as important by project students and seemed necessary with students who needed options rather than leaving school.

Services to Students and Families (Home Visits)

Number served - 12

Success rating - 5

Home visits were conducted by the Social Worker in the few instances where parents were unable to come to the school. The visits were conducted in order to ensure that contact with the home was maintained and to confirm that necessary services were being provided to the parents and/or students, and also to attend to any issues that involved both the home and the school. This component was used very successfully.

Table 1.2 provides details on the various components conducted by the Social Worker and the CAI Director.

Table 1.2 - Details of Component Aspects Conducted by Social Worker and CAI Director

Staff Member	Project Component	Number of Pupils	Success Rating
Social Worker	Work with CBE* staff (case/team updates)	49	5
	Service to students and families	12	5
	Individual contacts (parents)	21	5
	Individual contacts (students)	21	4
	School-community contacts	18	5
	Stress management (group work)	17	4
	Young Mothers Group	5	4
CAI Director	Grade 10 CAI: Reading/Mathematics/Writing	18	3.5**
	Grade 11 CAI: Reading/Mathematics/Writing	18	3.0**
	Grade 12 CAI: Reading/Mathematics/Writing	10	2.7**

* CBE = Calgary Board of Education
** Average of 3 subjects

Components (as reported by the CAI Director)

Students in CAI were enroled in a number of different reading, writing, and mathematics courses. Each student was assigned a unique number which permitted recording progress and time spent on each course. Results indicated that there were gains in achievement level. In general, the greater the amount of time spent on a program the greater the gain.

Students worked on individualized programs and progressed at their own pace. The 50 minute per day period was frequently divided among mathematics, reading, and written expression, with an average of 15 minutes per subject assigned.

Several changes have occurred this year in the organization for academic instruction. A pod system was initiated which had the same students grouped for instruction in Mathematics, Language Arts, and Social Studies by the same teacher. The Social Worker met with the core subject teachers each week to discuss problems. Timetabling of the students and teachers into the CAI lab was done by the pod Department Head rather than the CAI Director. The latter was no longer involved in selecting students.

A second change was that a greater number of different teachers now supervised project students in the CAI lab, resulting in varying standards being applied. One complaint voiced by teachers and students was that programs were getting boring. This may be reflected in the results and time spent. The latter was under teacher control.

Teachers did not use the lab as often as scheduled and sometimes excused students from terminals and specific courses. This resulted in reduced CAI gains.

To alleviate the boredom problem, new and different courses were added in order to provide greater variety; for example, science, practical reading skills, problem solving, and GED. Unfortunately, this interfered with computing grade level gains since old and new courses sometimes had different formats. The new formats will require changes in reporting gains. As can be seen from the data (p. 16-19), the amount of time spent on the three base courses in 1993-94 (Reading, Mathematics, and Writing) was reduced, resulting in lower gains.

Some of the best project students were transferred to more appropriate and challenging programs within the school. This affected overall results. Since all computer terminals were to be kept in use, the departing students were replaced by new ones.

External Consultants' Comments About Interventions

The employment of a professional social worker at Shaughnessy was

a unique feature of the START Project at that school. At other schools in the province the roles performed in these areas were the responsibility of Youth Care Workers or educators. In all these venues the need for social work type of assistance was great for pupils identified for START membership and for their families. During 1993-94, Year 3 of the Project, the Social Worker left at the end of January for family reasons, after which the position was eliminated. Comments on the effect of this on attendance and dropouts appear in the Outcomes section of this report.

Another unique feature of the START Project at Shaughnessy was the CAI courses in Mathematics, Reading, and Writing. Teachers of the academic core subjects for the START groups in Grade 10, 11, and 12 assumed greater responsibility for supervising and coordinating the CAI lab activities. A survey of their perceptions about this role and of the extent to which the CAI courseware complements or supplants the IOP curriculum seemed warranted and was conducted during an on-site visit by the evaluator in June. This survey attempted to determine the degree of success achieved in integrating the CAI courses with the particular versions of the IOP programs in place at the school. Some of the findings and conclusions based on the External Consultant's interviews with participants are listed next.

IOP Curriculum Match with Students' Performance Levels

All five teachers interviewed in June stated that nearly all START students were functioning well below the level demanded of courses such as Math 16,26, English 16 and 26. As a consequence, instruction was altered to focus on the rudimentary basic skills that were lacking (for example, initially, 80% of the students did not know the multiplication table.)

Appropriateness of the CAI Courseware

The strong features of the CAI programs were: a) the emphasis on the completeness of the coverage of basic skills; b) the provision of instant feedback to the student; c) the monitoring of student progress and the specificity of the record keeping of performance; and d) the independence and autonomy the student can experience with the individualized, self-pacing features. Shyness and school phobias can be dealt with more easily than in conventional instruction. CAI helped to facilitate re-entry to school.

Some of the shortcomings reported were mostly associated with the boredom perceived to be associated with CAI. (One teacher polled the class on discontinuing CAI and all voted to retain it.) Three years was perceived to be a bit much for some pupils. Fifteen minutes per subject was thought to be optimal for preventing boredom. The introduction of new programs was initiated to increase diversity of the total offering. Bridging programs prepared by the Columbia Curriculum Corporation have reduced the

frustration of coping with sharp discrepancies between program levels. One teacher noted that the standards for mastery (eligibility to advance to another level) were too high: pupils needed to see more progress.

Integration of CAI and the Altered IOP Programs

Integration was made easier because of the need for the emphasis on basic skills (a strength of CAI). It was apparent that the extent to which effort was expended to meld the classrooms and the CAI programs was quite variable. The use of the records from the CAI program also varied considerably.

Outcomes

Outcomes indicators applied in evaluating Project Plus at Shaughnessy School were percentage of school days attended, dropout rates, and academic achievement. For this final report for the third year of the Project comparisons of the results in these areas over three years are presented. Average times spent at CAI terminals (process indicators) for the programs in writing as well as reading and mathematics are also reported.

Attendance

Tables 1.3 and 1.4 display the percentage of school days attended for the START Project group and for the Comparison group. Attendance for Year 3 of the project, 1993-94, is compared with that of a baseline year. For baseline, the data from 1992-93 were used for those in the project for the first time ("New" students). For those members enrolled for the second or third year ("Continuing" students) the attendance for the year immediately prior to joining was used as a baseline.

Table 1.3 - Attendance During Baseline Years and 1993 - 94

Grade	Year in START	Baseline Years N*	Baseline Years %	1993-94 N	1993-94 %	Change (%)
10	Continuing	8	92.2	8	79.1	-13.1
	New	4	91.7	4	82.7	- 9.0
11	Continuing	11	92.2	11	87.6	- 4.6
	New	3	96.3	3	76.6	- 19.7
12	Continuing	5	90.8	5	94.6	+3.8
	New	3	87.0	3	76.0	- 11.0
All Grades	Continuing	24	91.9	24	86.2	- 5.7
	New	10	91.7	10	78.9	- 12.8
All Grades	Both	34	91.8	34	84.1	- 7.7

* Numbers are reduced from initial enrolments owing to transfers OR dropouts OR missing baseline data.

Table 1.3 displays the attendance percentage changes for the Project START group. Nearly all sub-groups showed a decline during 1993-94. The overall average change from the baseline year to 1993-94 was -7.7 percent. Table 1.4 reports the same data for the Comparison group.

Table 1.4 - Attendance During Baseline Years and 1993 - 94

Grade	Year in START	Baseline Years N*	Baseline Years %	1993-94 N	1993-94 %	Change (%)
10	Continuing	1	90.0	1	95.0	+5.0
	New	4	93.8	4	92.0	- 1.8
11	Continuing	2	84.5	2	97.0	+12.5
	New	10	89.5	10	82.4	- 7.1
12	Continuing	7	95.3	7	91.4	- 3.9
	New	2	91.0	2	90.5	- 0.5
All Grades	Continuing	10	92.6	10	85.8	+0.3
	New	16	90.8	16	92.9	- 5.0
All Grades	Both	26	91.5	26	88.5	- 3.0

* Numbers are reduced from initial enrolments owing to transfers OR dropouts OR missing baseline data.

The average change in percentage of school days attended for the Comparison group was -3.0 percent, somewhat better than the project average of -7.7.

Table 1.5 compares the changes in percentages of school days attended compared to the respective baseline years' levels for each of the three years that the project was evaluated.

Table 1.5 - Changes in Attendance for the START Group

Year	Baseline Year Attendance Number	Baseline Year Attendance %	1992-93 Attendance Number	1992-93 Attendance %	Net Change %
1991-92	39	81.9	39	87.9	+6.0
1992-93	48	91.7	48	91.7	0
1993-94	34	91.8	34	84.1	- 7.7
All	121	88.6	121	88.3	- 0.3

* Attendance changes were computed only for pupils with BOTH baseline and project year records

Tables 1.5 and 1.6 indicate that both groups recorded losses during Year 3 (1993-94). The Project group showed the larger decline.

The trend for both groups over the three years was a decrease in the net change in school attendance. This was most pronounced for the START group which recorded a decline of 7.7 percent for Year 3

in contrast to a gain of 6.0 percent in Year 1, and no change in Year 2. The overall average decline for the three year interval was 0.3 percent for START and 1.5 percent for the Comparison group.

Table 1.6 - Changes in Attendance for the Comparison Group

Year	Baseline Year Attendance Number	%	Project Year Attendance Number	%	Net Change %
1991-92	25	80.6	25	79.9	- 0.7
1992-93	25	91.3	25	90.4	- 0.9
1993-94	26	91.5	26	88.5	- 3.0
All	76	87.8	76	86.3	- 1.5

Transfers and Dropouts

Table 1.7 shows the transfer and dropout figures for the START students over the three years of the project at Shaughnessy School. Table 1.8 provides the same information for the Comparison group.

Table 1.7 - Transfers and Dropouts of START Project Students During Each Year

Year	N	Attending Elsewhere N	%	Quit School: Employed N	%	Unemployed N	%	Not Traceable* N	%	Total N	%
1991-92	77	11**	14.3	2	2.6	2	2.6	5	6.5	9	11.7
1992-93***	50	3	6.0	3	6.0	-	-	-	-	3	6.0
1993-94	65	5	8.9	1	1.5	8	12.3	1	1.5	10	15.4
Total	192	19	9.9	6	3.1	10	5.2	6	3.1	22	11.4

* It was assumed that students who could not be traced had quit school.
** This included one student who was in jail.
*** Data applicable after May 31, 1993, are reported in Table 1.9.

Table 1.8 - Transfers and Dropouts of Comparison Students During Each Year

Year	N	Attending Elsewhere N	%	Quit School: Employed N	%	Unemployed N	%	Not Traceable* N	%	Total N	%
1991-92	72	15	20.8	-	-	4	5.6	21	29.2	25	34.7
1992-93	62	4	6.5	2	3.2	5	8.1	11	17.7	18	29.0
1993-94**	56	5	8.9	3	5.3	6	10.7	1	1.8	10	17.9
Total	90	24	12.6	5	2.6	15	7.9	33	17.4	53	27.9

* It was assumed that students who could not be traced had quit school.
** Transfer and dropout data are spuriously low because the group was not selected until mid-year (see p.19).

For the Project group, Year 2 was the one showing the fewest dropouts (6.0%); however, this proportion rose dramatically during Year 3 to 15.4 percent. The figures for the Comparison group were 29.0 percent for Year 2 and 17.9 percent for Year 3. Both proportions during 1993-94 were high; however, the Project group's rate more than doubled while the Comparison group's proportion was nearly halved. No definite trends were discernable for the project group since the middle year figures (1992-93) did not represent a mid-point between those for the initial and final years.

With respect to transfers, the Comparison group, over the years, had been slightly more mobile than the START members, particularly in Year 1. Overall, the three-year averages for transfers to other schools were START - 9.9 percent and Comparison - 12.6 percent.

Follow-up Reports on Previous Years' START Members

Table 1.9 categorizes the May 31, 1994 status of the members of the previous year's START Project group. During 1993-94 the 1992-93 START members were reported to be engaged as follows: Transferred from Shaughnessy after June 30, 1993 - 4 (8.0%); continued in START in 1993-94 - 29 (58.0%); in a regular program in 1993-94 - 7 (14.0%); quit school and employed - 2 (4.0%); quit school and unemployed - 6 (12.0%); and status not known - 2 (4%). Follow-up was possible for all but 2 of last year's START class. Dropouts for those enrolled last year totalled 8 (16.0%). This proportion represents a medium-term outcome indicator of the impact of the Project relative to school leaving behaviour.

Table 1.9 - Follow-up of 1992-93 Project START Pupils

School	Number of Pupils	Continued in START		In Regular School		Dropped out				Transferred		Follow-up Not Possible	
						Employed		Unemployed					
		N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
Shaughnessy	50	29	58.0	7	14.0	2	4.0	6	12.0	4	8.0	2	4.0

Academic Achievement

The Computer Assisted Instruction (CAI) courseware in Reading and Mathematics included tests which measured achievement levels. The tables in this section display the rates of progress as measured by the CAI tests expressed as average grade equivalents per year. Since time spent at the computer terminals was also recorded this information is displayed and is expressed as average hours per year. The baseline rates describe the rate of gain per year up to the time of the initial placement test. The project rate of gain reports the average annual rate of progress between the initial pretest and the final one administered. The difference between baseline and project rates was used as an indicator of the impact of the CAI component of the project on academic achievement in the areas of Reading and Mathematics.

Grade 10 Reading and Mathematics

Table 1.10 shows achievement gains and average hours per year spent on the course for the 1993-94 students grouped according to their years in START. The latter ranges from 0.4 years to 2.8 years for the 18 pupils registered during 1993-94 as START students.

Table 1.10 - Annual Rates of Academic Progress in Grade 10 by Years on CAI

Subject	Years on CAI	Total of Hours on CAI	N	Average Progress in Grade Equivalents Per Year Baseline*	Project**	Average Annual Hours on CAI	Students Benefiting %***
Mathematics (N = 18)	2.8	74	4	0.54	0.93	26	100
	2.0	64	2	0.42	1.20	32	100
	1.8	41	4	0.49	0.84	23	100
	0.8	17	3	0.51	0.97	20	68
	0.6	8	3	0.55	0.70	14	100
	0.4	6	2	0.46	0.50	15	50
Average Annual Rates		-	-	0.50	0.86	22	89
Reading A (N = 18)	2.8	54	2	0.58	0.82	19	100
	2.4	44	1	0.46	0.86	44	100
	1.8	48	6	0.53	0.92	49	83
	1.6	42	1	0.65	1.50	26	100
	0.8	15	3	0.59	1.07	19	100
	0.6	15	5	0.47	0.37	8	0
Average Annual Rates		-	-	0.53	0.81	28	67

* Baseline rate = grade equivalent ÷ years in school on entry to the project
** Project rate = grade equivalent gain ÷ portion of year between testing periods during 1993-94
*** Proportion benefiting = %ge of pupils whose overall project rate exceeded baseline rate

Overall gains in rates of progress were higher for Mathematics than for Reading, the respective increases during 1993-94 being 0.36 and 0.28 grade equivalents per year. The overall proportions of students that improved their rates over the entry level were 89 percent for Mathematics and 67 percent for Reading. The average annual hours equivalents spent on CAI were markedly fewer during the third year of the project (for pupils on CAI at 0.8 years on less). The average annual rates of gain tended to decrease as the proportion of time spent on CAI declined.

Grade 11 Reading and Mathematics

Table 1.11 records the improvements in rates of progress for the 14 students registered in Reading and 18 students enrolled in Mathematics for Grade 11 during 1993-94. Rates of progress were improved for 89 percent of the students in Mathematics and for 86 percent in Reading. The average annual hours spent on CAI were lowest in Year 3: 13 hours in Mathematics and 10 hours in Reading. The average times were 23 hours in Mathematics and 15 in Reading.

Table 1.11 - Annual Rates of Academic Progress in Grade 11 by Years on CAI

Subject	Years on CAI	Total of Hours on CAI	N	Average Progress in Grade Equivalents Per Year Baseline*	Project**	Average Annual Hours on CAI	Students Benefiting %***
Mathematics (N = 18)	2.8	64	10	0.48	0.33	21	90
	2.2	94	1	0.31	0.96	42	100
	1.8	52	4	0.51	0.87	29	100
	0.8	10	3	0.36	0.57	13	67
Average Annual Rates		-	-	0.45	0.52	23	89
Reading A (N = 14)	2.8	48	6	0.58	0.42	17	83
	1.8	34	3	0.47	0.79	19	100
	0.8	8	5	0.37	0.48	10	80
Average Annual Rates		-	-	0.48	0.52	15	86

* Baseline rate = grade equivalent ÷ years in school on entry to the project
** Project rate = grade equivalent gain ÷ portion of year between testing periods during 1993-94
*** Students benefiting = %ge of pupils whose overall project rate exceeded baseline rate

Grade 12 Reading and Mathematics

Table 1.12 describes the progress made by the Grade 12 START students during 1993-94. Records were available for 10 pupils in Mathematics and 8 pupils in the Reading A course.

Table 1.12 - Annual Rates of Academic Progress in Grade 12 by Years in CAI

Subject	Years on CAI	Total of Hours on CAI	N	Average Progress in Grade Equivalents Per Year Baseline*	Project**	Average Annual Hours on CAI	Students Benefiting %
Mathematics (N = 10)	3.0	54	2	0.50	0.20	18	50
	1.8	26	4	0.40	0.69	15	50
	0.8	11	3	0.42	0.68	12	68
	0.4	5	1	0.51	0.31	13	100
Average Annual Rates		-	-	0.44	0.55	15	60
Reading A (N = 8)	3.0	51	1	0.45	0.27	17	0
	1.8	18	3	0.52	0.71	10	33
	0.8	4	3	0.49	0.17	5	0
	0.4	2	1	0.50	0.19	5	0
Average Annual Rates		-	-	0.50	0.39	8	12

* Baseline rate = grade equivalent ÷ years in school on entry to the project
** Project rate = grade equivalent gain ÷ portion of year between testing periods during 1993-94
*** Proportion benefiting = %ge of pupils whose overall project rate exceeded baseline rate

The proportion of students that benefited from CAI was lower for the Grade 12 group than for their counterparts in Grade 10 and Grade 11: 60 percent in Mathematics and 12 percent in Reading. The average annual rates of gain were 0.55 and 0.39 for Mathematics

and Reading, respectively. Rates in Reading were markedly depressed because of low rates during the 1993-94 project year where the following information is tabulated: 0.8 years on CAI (3 students) - 0.17 grade equivalents, and 0.4 years on CAI (one student) - 0.19 grade equivalents per year.

Changes in 1993-94 Rates of Academic Gains

Table 1.13 summarizes the results reported in the foregoing tables with respect to the changes in rates of learning in Mathematics and Reading. The gains in rates, as measured by the CAI courseware tests and expressed as grade equivalents per year, are listed in the right-hand column of Table 1.13 The gains were computed by subtracting the average annual rates of gain up to the time pupils entered the project from the rates of gain recorded during 1993-94.

Table 1.13 - Gains in Rates of Academic Progress in Baseline Year and 1993-94

Subject	Grade	Number of Pupils	Rate of Gain in Grade Equivalents per Year		
			Project (1993-94)	Expected* (Baseline)	Increase in Gain
Mathematics	10	18	0.86	0.50	0.36
	11	18	0.52	0.45	0.07
	12	10	0.55	0.44	0.11
	10 - 12	46	0.66	0.47	0.19
Reading	10	18	0.81	0.53	0.28
	11	14	0.52	0.48	0.04
	12	8	0.39	0.50	- 0.11
	10 - 12	40	0.62	0.51	0.11

* Expected rate of gain = Baseline grade equivalent ÷ years in school up to date of entry to Project START

During the third year of the project (1993-94) the improvements in rates of academic progress at Shaughnessy attributable to Project START were 0.19 grade equivalents (G.E.) per year in Mathematics and 0.11 G.E. in Reading. These were significantly lower than the gains in rates recorded for 1991-92 and 1992-93, which were, respectively: 0.91 G.E. and 0.32 G.E. in Mathematics, and 0.41 G.E. and 0.32 G.E. in Reading (Table 8, p. 30 of the Provincial Perspective Report).

Cross-years Comparisons

The fairest comparison of the efficacy of the program according to year of implementation was to select a grade which was exposed to CAI in all three years. In addition, the results for a single (first) year were selected to avoid the effects of multiple-year exposure. Table 1.14 displays the relevant data.

The comparisons in Table 1.14 apply to pupils during their first year on CAI. The rate of gain for Year 2 (1992-93) ranked highest,

followed by Year 1 (1991-92) and then Year 3. These results were consistent for each of Reading and Mathematics. For each Grade 10 subject the 1993-94 average rates were significantly lower than for the other years, particularly in Mathematics.

Table 1.14 - Progress of Grade 10 START Pupils During Their First Year on CAI

Year	Subject*	N	Average Progress in Grade Equivalents Per Year		% Pupils** Benefiting
			Baseline Year	Project Year	
1991-92	Reading 10	4	0.65	0.61	25.0
1991-92	Mathematics 10	6	0.59	1.11	100
Total	Both	10	0.61	0.91	70.0
1992-93	Reading 10	6	0.59	0.72	100
1992-93	Mathematics 10	3	0.50	1.56	100
Total	Both	9	0.53	1.28	100
1993-94	Reading 10	8	0.52	0.51	37.5
1993-94	Mathematics 10	8	0.51	0.75	75.0
Total	Both	16	0.51	0.63	56.3

* Reading 10 and Mathematics 10 were the only CAI subjects offered during each of the 3 years of the Project.
** Percentage of pupils whose grade equivalent score improved over the year.

Time Spent on CAI Writing

Table 1.15 displays the average hours and minutes spent on the CAI courseware for written expression. The groups of students reported are those members of the 1993-94 START Project who were enrolled in all three years. The average times spent at the CAI terminals were very low for 1993-94 compared to the averages posted for the other two years. Over the three years the average accumulated time per student was nearly 37 hours. This was comprised of 14 hours, 25 minutes in 1991-92, 18 hours, 11 minutes in 1992-93 and 4 hours, 20 minutes in 1993-94.

Table 1.15 - Average Times Spent on CAI Writing

Grade in Year 1 (1991-92)*	N	Average Time (Hours:Minutes)			Average Time Total 1991-94
		1991-92	1992-93	1993-94	
8	6	15:03	21:07	2:29	38:39
9	12	14:04	16:41	4:15	35:00
10	2	9:18	19:41	6:27	26:18
Totals	20	14:25	18:11	4:20	36:56

* The students advanced one grade per year; that is, the 6 Grade 8 students of 1991-92 were in Grade 10 in 1993-94.

External Consultants' Comments on Outcomes

Comparisons between the Project and Comparison group on attendance and dropouts for 1993-94 were made with caution. The reason is that apparently the Comparison Group was selected about mid-year while the Project Group was chosen in early September in order to maximize use of the CAI lab. The first report, dated January 15 showed 5 dropouts up to that time for the Project Group and no dropouts or transfers for the Comparison Group. A second report, dated March 31, showed nine dropouts for each group. That there were no dropouts or transfers in the January report suggests that the Comparison Group was selected that month, allowing no time for movement of students to occur. The dropout rate would be diminished accordingly since data for nearly one-half of the year could not be tapped. As a consequence, the Comparison Group's attendance and enrolment statistics are spuriously high and represent an inappropriate standard for use in making judgments about dropouts and attendance for the Project students.

Comparisons, however, with previous years' performance of the START groups provide a basis for judgments. Relative to attendance, Year 3 (1993-94) showed a substantial decline (-7.7%) compared to Year 2 (0%) and Year 1 (+2.3%). The dropout percentage of 15.3 during Year 3 was considerably higher than for Year 2 (6%) and marginally greater than that for Year 1 (11.7%). The relatively poor showing of these 1993-94 outcome indicators supports a conclusion that the project intervention components had significantly less positive impact on START members than previously.

One factor which contributed to the poor performance in Year 3 was the absence of the Social Worker component for the last half of the year. The year-end report noted that attendance for START members declined significantly after her departure at the end of January. The absence of this confidant, pupil advocate, counsellor, home visitor, and mediator could logically account for the relative decline in attendance and increases in dropouts. As noted above, forty percent of the dropouts (4) for START students occurred between January 15 and March 31, a period immediately following the departure of the Social Worker.

The other major project outcome indicator was the CAI test results for each year compared to baseline test levels. As noted for the Grade 10, 11, and 12 results, and the cross-years comparisons, 1993-94 was very markedly a lower performance year. Several changes in organization and responsibility may account for this. The responsibility for scheduling students and coordinating the day-to-day activities was shifted from the CAI Director. Teachers assumed a larger role. There was a significant reduction in average pupil time spent on task at the computer terminals. Some complaints were heard about the physical environment in the CAI lab (such as too warm, or too humid).

Based on the results of Year 2 in particular, however, the CAI courseware program is potentially an effective intervention for this type of student. To be effective, physical and learning conditions need to be optimal. Due care and attention need be paid to melding classroom instruction with the objectives and results from the CAI programs. Adequate time at the terminals must be scheduled. Hours had been reduced significantly during the final year in Writing as well as in Reading and Mathematics. Administrators and teachers who are involved should be enthusiastic and committed about CAI as a teaching aid. If boredom occurs with specific students, adjustments should be made.

The medium-term outcome indicator was the 1993-94 status of last-year's START members. About 18 percent (9) had since left school. Of these, only two (4.1%) were reported employed. Since all of last year's class were of legal school leaving age at Shaughnessy it is difficult to compare with the much younger pupils in junior high school grades which comprised the bulk of the population in other projects. Table 1.9 indicates that the dropouts for Year 2 totalled 10, or 20 percent (assuming that the two who could not be traced had quit school). This total was lower than the dropout rate of 29 percent (see Table 1.8) for the Comparison Group which occurred during the 1992-93 school year. If the dropouts a year later (1993-94) for the Comparison Group were added to this 29 percent, the total for the 1992-93 group would have been much higher than that for the START Group over the same time period. This wide difference supports the conclusion that the project at Shaughnessy School had a very pronounced effect on reducing the proportion of students leaving school.

Calgary School District No. 19

School: Clarence Sansom Community School

Personnel: Allan Snider (Principal and Project Coordinator)
Cathy Hughes, Work Experience Coordinator
Mindy Chugh, ESL Assistant, East Indian languages
Tina Merali, ESL Assistant, Spanish and Arabic
Chris Tham, ESL Assistant, 5 Oriental languages

Two of the assistants were qualified teachers in their native land and the other had a degree in linguistics. During the fall term of 1993-94 they were assigned to other schools and were available to START students only on a limited basis until the project ended on March 31, 1994.

Name of Project: ESL Job START (Pineridge Community Project)

Rationale

The major feature of the project was the use of Language Assistants who could converse with students and their parents in their native languages. This approach was premised on the idea that concept and language development and an understanding of the goals of the school were facilitated if communication and translating was done in the students' first language. The current phase of the project included a work experience component. Opportunities were developed within the school building and the students involved would progress to sites out of the school. More emphasis was placed during this phase on the relationship to the school of the parent/guardian. An attempt to understand this relationship through a structured interview process had been developed. There was also a need to maintain contact with students who had moved from the project site (junior high level) to the high school and to confirm that these students (6 in number) were still in school and being successful.

In order to develop comparative data the project identified students who demonstrated characteristics similar to those of the targeted students but who would not receive the benefit of the language assistants or other elements of the project program. These students were referred to as the Comparison Group.

Background Factors

The Pineridge Community which is served by the Clarence Sansom grades 7 - 9 Community School, is located in northeast Calgary. It is a very diverse area with respect to housing, incomes, cultural backgrounds, and languages. The area is well populated with immigrants who speak over thirty languages or dialects. As a consequence, a large English-as-a-Second-Language (ESL) program was required at the school. It is from this group that the Project

START pupils were selected.

As a Community School, Clarence Sansom had assigned significant priority to reaching out to communicate with, and provide support to, the immigrant families associated with pupils enroled. As was noted previously, the three ESL assistants who had been funded under Project START auspices were available on a much reduced basis during the final year of the project.

Background Characteristics of Pupils

Table 2.1 records that 13 pupils were identified as project members during the fall term 1993-94. Over 60 percent (8) of these were new to the project in 1992-93 and five were categorized as "Continuing" pupils, having been provided service in 1991-92.

Table 2.1 - Enrolment of START Pupils

Grade	Group	Number	%
7	Continuing	1	7.7
7	New	2	15.4
8	Continuing	2	15.4
8	New	2	15.4
9	Continuing	2	15.4
9	New	4	30.8
7-9	Continuing	5	38.5
7-9	New	8	61.5
Total		13	100

Table 2.2 indicates that a comparison group of six pupils, 2 each in Grade 7, 8, and 9, was selected as a referent for use in evaluating project outcomes. Selection criteria used in choosing this group were similar to the ones applied for the START group.

Table 2.2 - Enrolment of Comparison Group

Grade	Group	Number	%
7	Continuing	-	-
7	New	2	33.3
8	Continuing	-	-
8	New	2	33.3
9	Continuing	-	-
9	New	2	33.3
7-9	Continuing	-	-
7-9	New	6	100
Total		6	100

The baseline year percentage of days attended at school was not available for 4 of the 9 students new to the project during 1993-94. (Their baseline year was 1992-93.) For the group continuing in the project, comprised of those who were project members last year, the baseline year was 1991-92. As indicated in Table 2.3, the baseline year average attendance was 97.6 percent for students in the continuing group.

Table 2.3 - Percentage Attendance During the Baseline Year

Grade	Group	Year	Baseline Year Attendance Number	%	Number of N/A
7	Continuing	1991-92	1	--	-
7	New	1992-93	4	98.1	2
8	Continuing	1991-92	1	98.9	-
8	New	1992-93	3	96.8	-
9	Continuing	1991-92	2	96.8	-
9	New	1992-93	2	86.0	2
All	Total Continuing	1991-92	4	97.6	-
All	Total New	1992-93	5	92.4	4
	Total	1991-92 and 1992-93	9	94.8	4

The baseline year percentage of attendance averaged 92.4 percent for the five members of the group new to Project START for whom this information could be accessed.

The staff in previous years indicated that the most frequent indicators influencing selection of pupils for the project were "Low self esteem" and "Low levels of skills in the basics." The next most frequent indicators used were "Native language deficiencies" and "Had schooling interrupted." This last characteristic was unique to the Clarence Sansom project pupils since it indicated that some of the children emigrated from war-torn countries where schooling and normal living conditions did not exist.

External Consultants' Comments About Background Factors

Clarence Sansom's ESL Job START project differed markedly from other Alberta projects. The target group consisted of immigrant children, over half enroled in English as a Second Language (ESL) classes who had little facility in English. All had other problems which inhibited, as noted above, normal development and progress in school. The other feature which set the project apart was its underlying rationale. This was the premise that assistance from a person who could converse fluently in the student's native language (counselling, translation, tutoring, classroom assistance, and so on) was an effective way of bridging the gap between abject failure and minimal success.

In general, the project differed from others in the degree to which individual one-on-one attention was required. The nature of the target children's main problem and the solution chosen required a high level of individualization. On a per pupil basis this was unavoidably expensive. Unfortunately, in the final year of the project this component was drastically reduced when the Language Assistants became employed at other schools.

Interventions

The main Project START budget expenditure initially at Clarence Sansom School was for the part-time employment of three Career Assistants (sometimes called ESL Language Assistants). As noted in the first section, these people could converse with project pupils and their parents in their native languages. As noted above, this service was substantially curtailed during 1993-94.

Table 2.4 - Project Components, Student Numbers, and Success Ratings

Staff Member**	Project Component	Overall Rating*	No of Pupils
Career Assistants	Parental contact	5	13
Resource Teacher/ Career Assistants	Achievement testing and monitoring	3	13
ESL Assistants	Tutorial support and language acquisition	5	13
Work experience coordinator	Work experience and career awareness	4	6
ESL Assistants	Computer literacy	5	13
All staff	Involvement in Extracurricular activities	4	13

*1 = low success rating, 5 = high success rating

** Late in the fall term the components provided by Career or ESL Assistants were reduced and shared by regular school staff.

Table 2.4 provides a panoramic overview of the components which comprise the START project at Clarence Sansom Community School.

Report on Project Components

The following component descriptions and ratings are copied verbatim from the report submitted by the Project Coordinator.

Components

Parental Contact

Number served - 13

Success rating - 5

Continued contact to update parents on how students are doing occurs each reporting period. Discussion with parents helps to confirm placement decisions for next school year. Parents are contacted if discipline or social concerns develop. Good cooperation was achieved. Parents of students new to the project were all interviewed in order to develop background knowledge and information about the students. Parental involvement in the life of the school remains limited although many came to a "meet the teacher night" and some accompanied students on a job awareness field trip.

Tutorial Support with ESL Language Assistants

Number served - 13

Success rating - 5

The direct support of Language Assistants remains the most significant component influencing students' gains in learning outcomes. Improvement is manifested in more confidence, willingness to participate and interact with the peer group or with regular teachers. An aspect of the support is a willingness to seek counselling and personal support through confiding in the assistants who are treated as friends. The students will often come in for extra help after school and at lunch time.

ESL Language Assistants

Number served - 13

Success rating - 5

This has been the strongest component of the START project at Sansom. Students benefitted most from one-on-one or small group (in their own language) tutorial support. This component was impacted severely when language assistants (who had trained at Sansom and developed the project over 3 years) were hired away to other schools and were available to Sansom on a reduced schedule. When the project ended in March a significant deterioration in student performance and attendance was noted for some language groups (Lebanese, Spanish).

Work Experience and Career Awareness

Number served - 6

Success rating - 4

Primary focus during this term has been on Grade 9 in-school assignments:

2 students - Home Economics

2 students - Library helper
1 student - Computer lab helper
Various experiences available as lunchroom helpers: cash register, inventory, and cleaning.

Work experience coordination included job shadowing at NORCEN ENERGY. Students were assigned to employees proficient in their language. Focus was on staying in school. Career awareness and understanding of employment possibilities were important outcomes.

Computer Literacy

Number served - 13

Success rating - 5

Students continue to improve in computer knowledge and application. All of them have mastered basic literacy and key-boarding requirements and have worked with specialized software; for example, Where in the World is Carmen San Diego. Many writing samples are produced using the computer word processing software. Students have learned to access resources in the library using the UTLAS system and are familiar with computerized circulation. Some students were learning to use CDROM programs; for example ROSETTA STONE.

Extra-Curricular Activities and Involvement

Number served - 13

Success rating - 4

More involvement in student activities occurred as students became established within the school. Boys, in particular, were more likely to be involved in athletics. Many of them were significant players on the school soccer teams. Socialization improved and many of the students attended school dances. Involvement seems to depend on interest by other ESL students, encouragement by teachers and student leaders, and no interfering parental expectations. Older girls became very boy-conscious.

Achievement Testing, Monitoring

Number served - 13

Success rating - 3

The Kaufman Test of Educational Achievement was administered to the 13 target students during the fall and later again in the spring. Although results for most students indicated gains in grade equivalents, on Mathematics, Reading, and Spelling subtests these gains were not generally significant, except in a limited number of

cases. Gains were more likely to occur in the Mathematics and Reading areas. It appears that progress was slow throughout the year. Report card results for target ESL students were satisfactory relative to other ESL students and comparison students.

External Consultants' Comments about Interventions

Factors external to the Project were a major influence in shaping START services in 1993-94. Year 3 of the components involving ESL at Clarence Sansom School was drastically affected by cost reduction actions taken by the Calgary School District. In order to reduce District costs the ESL Language Assistants were re-assigned to other ESL programs in the District to provide service. As a consequence, the main component for the project, the Language assistant/Tutoring/ Counselling program was substantially reduced. After the departure of the Language Assistants the components described in this section were largely provided and coordinated by regular members of the school staff.

Outcomes

Outcome indicators of project results were, percentage of school days attended, dropouts from school, and academic achievement. Medium-term indicators, the current year's status of LAST year's class, were not available since the school misinterpreted the recording form by reporting future status of THIS year's class.

Attendance

Table 2.5 provides a three-year portrayal of the percentage of school days attended by the START pupils at Clarence Sansom School. Changes in attendance averages were not provided for Years 1 and 2 since baseline information was not available.

The 1993-94 average change in attendance for the START group was a decline (-1.3%). When related to the change for the comparison group (+1.9) the latter appear as the front runners. The project services had minimal or no impact on this indicator.

Table 2.5 - Changes in Attendance for START Project Pupils

Year	Group	Baseline Year Attendance Number	%	Project Year Attendance Number	%	Change %
1991-92	START	12	-	12	98.3	-
1992-93	START	13	-	13	96.8	-
	Comparison	6	-	6	96.1	-
1993-94	START	9	94.8	9	93.5	- 1.3
	Comparison	4	97.0	4	98.9	+1.9

Dropouts

Table 2.6 describes the numbers and proportions of START and Comparison Group students leaving school during the three-year time span. During all of the years it appears that no START members dropped out. The Year 1 Report shows a 33.3 percent dropout (p.116); however, follow-up figures shown in the Year 2 report (p.33) shows a dropout of zero (see footnote below Table 2.6). One (16.7%) of the Comparison group either transferred to another school (Toronto) or dropped out during the 1993-94 school year.

Table 2.6 - Dropouts Over Three Years*

Year	N	Group	Quit School: Employed N	Employed %	Unemployed N	Unemployed %	Not Traceable** N	Not Traceable** %	Total N	Total %
1991-92*	12	START	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
1992-93	13	START	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
	6	Comparison	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
1993-94	13	START	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
	6	Comparison	-	-	-	-	1	16.7	1	16.7
Total	38	START	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
	12	Comparison	-	-	-	-	1	8.3	1	8.3

* The recording forms provided were not used, therefore interpretation was difficult. Four students were listed, in the Year 1 Report, as not intending to go on to high school, but this was contradicted in the Year 2 Report.
** It was assumed that students who could not be traced had quit school.

Academic Achievement

The Kaufman Test of Educational Achievement was administered as a pretest in the fall and a post-test in the spring. During Year 2 the interval between testing was 6 months and the change scores in Mathematics, Reading, and Spelling were compared to those of a comparison group. During Year 3 (1993-94) the interval between tests was longer and no scores were reported for the comparison group. Table 2.7 displays the academic achievement average changes for these groups for each of the last two years of the project.

The average gains, expressed as grade equivalents, for the START group for 1993-94 were far below the levels recorded for the previous year in two subjects. The respective changes for the two years in Mathematics were +2.7 in 1992-93 and +0.8 in 1993-94. For Reading the respective gains were 1.9 and 0.9, respectively. Gains for spelling were similar in the two years for the START students: 1.3 in 1992-93 and 1.5 in 1993-94.

Relative to the Comparison Group, in 1992-93 the START students out-performed them in Mathematics (change score of +2.7 vs. +2.2), but fell far short the next year (+0.8 vs. +2.2). The Reading

Table 2.7 - Changes in Academic Achievement

Year	Subject	Group*	N	Average Scores in Grade Equivalents Fall	Spring	Change
1992-93	Mathematics	START Comparison	13 6	7.1 6.1	9.8 8.3	+2.7 +2.2
1992-93	Reading	START Comparison	13 6	3.7 3.9	5.6 4.8	+1.9 +0.9
1992-93	Spelling	START Comparison	13 6	4.3 4.6	5.6 6.7	+1.3 +2.1
1993-94	Mathematics	START	13	7.2	8.0	+0.8
1993-94	Reading	START	13	3.7	4.6	+0.9
1993-94	Spelling	START	13	3.9	5.4	+1.5

*Comparison student scores were not reported in 1993-94

change score for START in 1992-93 was a full grade equivalent higher than for the Comparison Group (+1.9 vs. 0.9) but the next year both scores were equal at +0.9. In both years the Comparison Group recorded a significantly higher gain in Spelling than the START students.

Follow-up Report on 1992-93 START Members

The reporting form for these data was misinterpreted by the school. No information was provided about the previous year's class. Instead, destinations for next year for the 1993-94 class were reported.

External Consultants' Comments about Outcomes

Attendance had not been a problem for the START and Comparison Group students at Clarence Sansom School. The baseline levels reported for 1993-94 were quite high (94.8% and 97.0%) therefore improvement would have been difficult.

Dropouts had not likely posed a problem either. Accordingly, even with the drastic reduction in the support service provided during 1993-94 the attendance and school-leaving outcome indicators support the conclusion that the project was successful.

Academic achievement gains in Mathematics and Reading were considerably reduced during 1993-94 compared to the gains posted by last year's class and the Comparison Group during the previous year. The reduced support by the Language Assistants was responsible. This in turn supports the notion that their service was crucial to the total success of the project.

Calgary School District #19

School: Louise Dean School

Personnel: Ms. Ruth Ramsden-Wood, Principal
Daycare worker, commencing January 1, 1992

Name: Clara Christie Learning Centre (an Infant-Toddler Daycare Facility)

Rationale

Louise Dean Centre, a school for pregnant and parenting teens, was staffed by a multidisciplinary team consisting of social workers and child care workers from Catholic Family Services, nurses from the Perinatal Division and educators from Calgary Board of Education. Members from each discipline teamed together to provide the appropriate program for individual students. Many of the students had a history of educational problems and had experienced problems in their home lives. In response to the specialized needs of these young women, the Clara Christie Learning Centre was opened in February of 1992. The Learning Centre was established to provide quality child care, teach parenting skills, show relevance between education and work, and help students develop the strategies and understandings which will encourage them to make "learning" a life-long pursuit (1993-94 Mid-year Report, Louise Dean School.) The 1993-94 year end report added this objective which focused on the infants and toddlers: To provide an environment where high quality child care was supported and developed through strategic interventions and which met physical, social, and emotional needs as well as promoting language and skill development.

Background Factors

The inputs of Project START at the Louise Dean School were provided by the staffing for the Infant-Toddler Learning Centre, noted above. A Career Planning Program and a School Program were complementary, and part of the regular program, and were NOT funded by Project START.

Background Characteristics of Pupils

The student population at Louise Dean was highly at risk for school drop out, for abuse and neglect of the children, and for poor medical outcomes leading to learning difficulties in later life. Forty percent of students had already been dropouts. The longer they were out of school, the less likely they were to complete their education leading them in a downward economic spiral for themselves and their children. The Learning Centre played an integral part in the Louise Dean program as it continued to help

students improve in academic performance, in healthy life-style choices resulting in higher birth weights, and in breaking dysfunctional multi-generational patterns (1993-94 Mid-year Report from the school).

It was clear that pregnant teens and teen mothers were at-risk and very likely to drop out of school. In particular the eleven START Project teens were judged likely to experience long term victimization, abuse, and neglect. They had been selected by a panel which used criteria such as age, grade, maturation, social-emotional needs, development levels, role adjustment appraisals, family history, support systems, social interaction with the family, health status, and academic support needs. Table 3.1 gives the enrolment figures for the START Project pupils.

Table 3.1 - Enrolment 1993-94

Grade	Group	Enrolment No.	%
10	New	1	9.1
11	New	4	36.4
12	New	6	54.5
All	New	11	100

During 1993-94 eleven of the highest risk students were identified as START Project members. All were of senior high school age: three were age 16, three age 17, four age 18, and one age 19.

External Consultants' Comments on Background Factors

The pupils selected for inclusion in the START Project had high potential for dropping out of school. It was evident that the school staff and professionals in the supporting services had the expertise and experience to plan and implement appropriately the various programs at Louise Dean School.

The resources, planning, and staffing of the Dr. Clara Christie Learning Centre received exceptional care, commitment, and expertise in complementing and supplementing the other programs at the school. It is noteworthy that the 1993-94 year end report submitted by the school added objectives pertaining to the quality of care for the infants and toddlers as well as for their development. This acknowledged that the children were beneficiaries as well.

Interventions

Four components of the Learning Centre were: risk assessment, the child care worker, work experience, and outreach. The target

students (11) experienced the first three.

Components

Descriptions and ratings of the components, submitted by the school personnel, are given below.

Risk Assessment

Students served - 11

Success rating - 5

Babies and toddlers were accepted into the Learning Centre on the basis of a risk assessment. This assessment included the age and grade of the mother (junior high age students were usually accepted), the parenting skills of the young woman involved, whether the student was breast feeding, the student's access to family or support, and the health needs of the baby. If a student was not accepted, a child care worker was assigned to the young mother to support her in finding suitable arrangements for the child.

Child Care Worker

Students served - 11

Success rating - 5

Once a child had been accepted into the Learning Centre, the mother and child were assigned to a primary Child Care Worker. It was the responsibility of the worker to keep close contact with the child and the mother. The worker continually assessed the babies' and the mothers' needs. She would call the mother if she was absent from school and do a home visit if there were child care concerns.

The child care worker constantly focused upon building a positive working relationship between herself and the young mother. As a bond developed between the professional and the student, the worker was able directly to teach the student positive child care practises. With increased confidence and knowledge the young mother moved toward developing self-assessment skills. For example, the student would begin to understand the importance of communicating the problems she was experiencing with her child.

Work Experience

Success rating - 5

In addition to direct child care, the Learning Centre was also a

site for work experience students. Some students were eager to spend time in the centre with either the infants or the toddlers. The key benefit of work experience in the Learning Centre was the development of parenting skills. The modelling and teaching of the workers and the young mothers was a positive influence on students who may not have had previous exposure to quality parenting skill. This experience helped these young women develop confidence in their prospective role as a parent and gave them the opportunity to discuss questions which were important to them. The students' actions in the Learning Centre also gave the social agencies an understanding of a student's ability to bond with her own baby. This gave professionals information which allowed them to be proactive in their approaches to dealing with the student.

Outreach

Success rating - 5

One of the problems encountered in running the Learning Centre has been a shortage of spaces to house all the parenting mothers. In order to allow more students to have access to in-house child care, the Centre staff became more involved in working with community day cares. This outreach is designed to help students deal with shorter term placement in the Centre and to facilitate the movement of their children into community child care facilities. The staff of the Centre worked in conjunction with these community resources to help their personnel better understand the needs of the parenting adolescent.

The 1993-94 year-end report submitted by the school indicated that the Outreach program had been extremely successful. It also reported that because of increased funding the Learning Centre will be operating at increased capacity for September, 1994. The age of the children accepted in the Centre dropped from 0 - 35 months to 0 - 18 months, thus allowing many more children to be served. Finally, a change was reported in the screening and delineation of needs of infants and young mothers to support their transition to other daycare facilities and to the community.

The changes planned for 1994-95 will increase the number of children and teen mothers that can be served by Louise Dean School. There was a need to extend the period of support and to provide follow-up service to those leaving the school. The leadership and support to the other daycare agency will ensure more adequate follow-ups.

<u>External Consultants' Comments on Interventions</u>

The interventions described above have been successfully implemented as the planners intended.

The Child Care Centre is not only a location for the care and nurture of the baby, and modelling and work experience for the teen mother. It also provides a practical benefit to the mother and can serve as an inducement to attend school regularly. Social and intrapersonal qualities developed here can transfer to other settings.

The changes planned for 1994-95 will increase the number of children and teen mothers that can be served by Louise Dean School. There was a need to extend the period of support and to provide follow-up service to those leaving school. The leadership and support provided to the other daycare agency will ensure more adequate follow-up.

Outcomes

Indicators of outcomes attributable to the START Project at Louise Dean School are percentage of school days attended compared to a baseline period and dropouts from school. No achievement data were gathered during the first and third years of the project. Follow-up reports on the previous years' project pupils were not provided since it was not feasible to collect this information in a large urban district.

Attendance

Table 3.2 reports the percentage of attendance for the START students for three years beginning with the 1991-92 term.

Table 3.2 - Changes in Attendance for START Project Pupils

Year	Baseline Year Attendance Number	%	Project Year Attendance Number	%	Net Change %
1991-92	10	44.6	10	49.2	+4.6
1992-93	11	54.5	11	64.5	+10.0
1993-94	11	41.3	11	78.1	+36.8
All	32	46.9	32	64.4	+17.5

There were successive improvements ranging from 4.6 percent in year 1 to 36.8 percent in Year 3. The final year had the biggest gain.

Dropouts and Transfers

Table 3.3 displays the proportion of project pupils who quit school during the three years. The largest proportion (40.0%) to leave school during the year occurred in Year 1. Only one project student quit during the next year, while three (27.3%) quit during Year 3. The dropout rate was 25.0 percent over the three years.

Table 3.3 - Dropouts and Transfers of START Project Students

Year	N	Attending Elsewhere N	%	Quit School Employed N	%	Unemployed N	%	Status unknown N	%	Total N	%
1991-92	10	-	-	-	-	1	10.0	3	30.0	4	40.0
1992-93	11	2	18.2	-	-	1	9.1	-	-	1	9.1
1993-94	11	-	-	-	-	3	27.3	-	-	3	27.3
Total	32	2	6.3	-	-	5	15.6	3	9.4	8	25.0

Evaluations of the Children's Learning Centre

An external group conducted an evaluation of the Louise Dean School during 1992-93 (Brunette, *et al, 1993)*. Sources of data for this evaluation included interview and questionnaire surveys of Child Care Workers (CCW's) (N=8) and Students (18). Raw data in the form of evaluation ratings and verbatim records of the responses were appended to the 1992-93 year end report. Table 3.4 shows the evaluation ratings assigned by students to the various outcomes achieved by the Dr. Clara Christie Learning Centre, and Table 3.5 lists the views of the CCWs. For each question presented to students and child care workers a summary categorization reporting the proportions of positive, ambivalent, and negative replies are tabulated as well. These reporting forms compress more than two dozen pages of responses to the listings displayed in Table 3.4 and Table 3.5.

The students' evaluation ratings and comments are summarized in Table 3.4. Overall, 85.3 percent of their supporting comments for the ratings they assigned were positive. If the ratings and comments for the question, "Since coming to the Centre is your child's health worse, the same, or improved?" are excluded from the total, the positive responses rise to 89 percent.

The Child Care Workers' (CCWs) self evaluation ratings are displayed in Table 3.5. Eight child care workers responded to the questions listed and assigned ratings on a 5-point scale. The mean (average) ratings for most aspects of service at the Learning Centre were 4.5 or higher on the scale, indicating a collective perception that services have achieved a high degree of excellence. The single exception is the 3.4 rating on a five point scale in response to "Rate the parenting students on how well they communicate with their children." This is in contrast to the self-rating average of 4.6 (see Table 3.4) assigned by the teen mothers about their own communication behaviour.

Table 3.4 - Students' Ratings of Learning Centre Services and Supporting Comments

Service Outcome	Mean Rating* on Scale	Rating of Supporting Comments (%) Positive	Neutral	Negative
How comfortable you feel in asking questions and/or discussing concerns with the child care staff	4.3	94.1	0	5.9
What you have learned about caring for your child		82.3	11.8	5.9
Changes in yourself since enroling in the centre		94.1	5.9	0
Changes in your child since enroling in the centre		100	0	0
Changes in the relationship with the CCW since you first met		87.5	12.5	0
The quality of care your child receives from the CCW	4.3	77.7	0	22.2
How the CCW has helped your relationship with your child	4.5	82.3	17.6	0
The support you get from your CCW as a mother	4.5	94.1	5.9	0
Changes in your child's health since coming to the Centre		16.7	55.5	27.8
Changes in your child's physical well being	4.1			
How the children are treated at the Centre	4.8			
How well your CCW teaches your child to communicat e	4.5			
How well you communicate with your child	4.6			
Changes in your school attendance since entering the Centre	4.1			
Overall satisfaction with the care your child received	4.6			
The respect as the mother of your child you have received	4.3			

* Ratings ranged from a low of 1 to a high of 5. No rating was assigned to some statements.

Table 3.5 - CCWs' Ratings of Learning Centre Services and Supporting Comments

Service Outcome	Mean Rating* on scale	Rating of Supporting Comments %) Positive	Neutral	Negative
Quality of care the children receive from the Centre staff	4.9	100	0	0
Support you give to the parenting students as mothers	4.9	100	0	0
How the parents feel about the care their children receive	4.7	100	0	0
How well the Child Care Workers communicate with the children	4.9	100	0	0
How well the parenting students communicate with the children	3.4	28.6	71.4	0
How comfortable the students are in asking questions or discussing their children with Child Care Workers	4.5	100	0	0
Has the Centre helped the children's physical well being	4.8	100	0	0

* Rating of 1 was low and 5 was high.

External Consultants' Comments on Outcomes

The overall improvement in attendance of well over three days per month was quite likely a consequence of the sum total of all the services offered at Louise Dean School. Over the three year period one-quarter of the project group quit school during their project year. At first glance this proportion seems high until one considers the fraction that would have been attending without the services of the Learning Centre and other programs at Louise Dean. Without these supports, attendance during the prenatal and postnatal periods would have been very low. The specific impacts on attendance attributable to the Learning Centre cannot be determined since data from a comparison group not provided this service were not available. However, the data support the conclusion that the Learning Centre PLUS the other programs at the school had a very positive impact on both daily attendance and staying in school.

Specific feedback about the results of the Learning Centre experience *per se* was provided by the surveys conducted by an external evaluation panel during year 2. Since all of the average evaluation ratings assigned by the teen mothers exceeded 4.0 on the 5-point scales one must conclude that this major client group found the support and guidance highly satisfactory for that aspect of their school experience. The self-evaluation ratings of the Child Care Workers were even higher, indicating high levels of satisfaction and pride in their work. The external consultant concurs with these assessments.

Lethbridge School District No. 31

Supervisor in Charge - D. Shannon Geer, Principal/Consultant
Division of Instructional Services

Schools - Hamilton Junior High School (Grades 7 to 9)
Gail Vandebeek, Child & Youth Care Worker
Gilbert Paterson Community School (Grades ECS to 9)
Debi Lysak, Child & Youth Care Worker
Wilson Junior High School (Grades 7 to 9)
Greg Paskuski, Child & Youth Care Worker
Allan Watson School Integrated/Occupational (IOP) School (Grades 8 to 12)
Monica Bosscha & Carole-Anne McFalls, Child & Youth Care Workers

Name of Project: Project Connections

Rationale

Lethbridge School District #51 provided a comprehensive and wide-ranging set of programs and services for special needs students. Project Connections was designed to supplement and complement these. The following beliefs and assumptions which guided the planning for the project were outlined in the District's proposal:

1. For a school program to be successful it must "fit" into the overall character of that school. Accordingly, each school needs to have reasonable autonomy in planning and implementing a program.

2. The city cannot provide more Work Experience employment than is currently available to the two high schools and to the Allan Watson IOP school.

3. Establishing bonds with peers, the school, and significant adults is an important factor in preventing dropping out of school and in developing adequate self images. Augmenting the "people power" part of the project will facilitate bonding. The proposal indicates the human resources and infrastructures needed:

   i) youth workers
   ii) tutors/supervisors
   iii) parent support
   iv) cooperation and coordination within the school and with persons in external agencies.

4. The cooperation and coordination as noted above and implied in the title of the project (Connections) reinforces the notion that partnerships among people and agencies have been assigned

high priority in the District.

Background Factors

All four junior high schools in the Lethbridge School District were participants in Project START. The school district and other agencies in the city provided a broadly based set of other programs for at-risk pupils (listed in the project proposal and the Year 1 Report). The Project START funding at Lethbridge was used exclusively for direct service to students identified and listed as START members. Resources were used mainly for the employment of Child and Youth Care Workers (CYCWs), one full time equivalent at each school, and tutors. Infrastructure costs and administration, coordination, office and support services such as school liaison worker, elementary and secondary school counsellors, were provided by the District.

Table 4.1 indicates that, during the third year, 438 pupils had been selected for project services. This group was divided between "continuing" students from previous years (37%) and those new to the project (63%). There were 29 girls in the "Teen Moms Program and day care facility based in the Allan Watson Integrated Occupational Program (IOP) School. All but five of the 438 pupils were divided among the three junior high grades.

The only background data requested for the Year 3 report was the percentage of attendance for the various groups of pupils during a baseline year (1992-93 for "New" members, and 1991-92 or earlier for "Continuing" pupils). On the baseline year attendance indicator there were variations among the schools, reflecting differences in the communities and types of populations served. Highest overall attendance for both New and Continuing project members was at Gilbert Paterson School. However, at Wilson School the New pupils in Grade 7 had an average baseline year attendance of 93.4 percent which was near the norm for the province. Over all schools the baseline averages were 90.4 percent for continuing students and 91.6 percent for those new to the project.

External Consultants' Comments About Background Factors

The Lethbridge School District START Project was the largest in Alberta serving 438 pupils. This number was less than the number reported last year (478). Because of the high enrolment the per-pupil costs were by far the lowest in this province.

Nearly all resources of the project were aimed at direct services to pupils. One exception was the time and effort required of the CWYCs in gathering and reporting the data needed for evaluation. All overhead management and support services were provided from District funds. None of the START funding at Lethbridge was used to reduce the costs of regular class teachers or to provide

additional help in office administration. The benefits of good planning remain evident in Project Connections at Lethbridge.

Table 4.1 - Enrolments and Baseline Years' Attendance of Start Students

School	Group	Grade	Number	%	Baseline Year Attendance Number	%	No Data*
Hamilton (N = 161)	Continuing	8	17	10.5	13	85.4	4
		9	24	14.9	18	92.4	6
	New	7	59	36.6	48	95.0	11
		8	28	17.4	25	90.5	4
		9	33	20.5	26	87.6	7
Gilbert Paterson (N = 94)	Continuing	8	19	20.2	15	95.0	4
		9	23	24.5	22	89.5	1
	New	7	32	34.0	26	95.2	6
		8	14	14.9	13	94.5	1
		9	6	6.4	4	95.8	2
Wilson (N = 136)	Continuing	7	2	1.5	-	-	2
		8	40	29.4	38	88.7	2
		9	26	19.1	23	90.9	3
	New	7	41	30.1	38	93.4	3
		8	12	8.8	10	86.5	2
		9	15	11.0	15	88.0	-
Allan Watson (N = 47)	Continuing**	8	-	-	-	-	-
		9	11	23.4	9	91.3	2**
		10	-	-	-	-	-
		11	-	-	-	-	-
		12	-	-	-	-	-
	New**	8	20	42.6	15	89.7	5
		9	11	23.4	5	89.8	6
		10	-	-	-	-	-
		11	4	8.5	2	87.5	2
		12	1	2.1	1	97.0	-
All	Continuing	All	162	37.0	138	90.4	24
All	New	All	276	63.0	227	91.6	49
All = 438	All	All	438	100.0	365	91.1	73

* One or more of: 1) No baseline data, 2) transferred, 3) dropped out

** 18 Continuing and 13 New students (most in Grade 9) identified at mid-year were not accounted for at year-end.

Interventions

The major interventions funded by START Project grants were the services performed by the Child and Youth Care Workers (CYCWs) and the tutors at each school. These complemented and supplemented the services to pupils provided by various personnel in the school district and external agencies.

The full-time service providers funded by the Project were the

CYCWs who, in addition to counselling Project START students and serving them as advocates, coordinated the Project's school and community services, liaised with school staff and administration, and, with the exception of Allan Watson School, scheduled and supervised the work of tutors. They also served as role models and confidants. In addition, they accepted responsibility for gathering and reporting the information required for this evaluation report. The descriptions, comments, and ratings in the Components section are those submitted by project personnel. Reports from the four school were edited to reduce the length.

Table 4.2 provides an overview of the numbers of pupils served by interventions available in all four schools. Table 4.3 displays the numbers and proportions of students in each intervention from the "Others" category in Table 4.2.

Components

Ratings are averages of those reported by Project staff.

Tutoring

Number served - 222

Success rating - 4.0 (Evaluator's estimate of rating)

Students gave up an option class, noon hour, or after school time to receive tutoring. In several schools a tutor served in the classroom as a teacher aide, assisting individuals and following up after class. To qualify, pupils had to be failing two or more subjects. A real effort was made for two-way communication with teachers. In schools where teachers were organized in teams (pods) the tutoring needs were reviewed weekly. In one school the full time teacher aide had a record for all the mathematics assignments for each class in the school. Since mathematics was a major problem area teacher aide and tutoring resources were directed there. Tutoring will be reduced 50 percent next year at Paterson School and 75 percent at the others. These reductions are required since school resources will be the sole source of funding.

Counselling

Number served - 173

Success rating - 4.4

One-on-one counselling took place in various settings, such as the home and by telephone. Group and peer counselling were also used. Students keep in touch after graduating to high school. Team meetings with counsellors and/or administrators were held. Decisions about referrals to school district professionals or

Table 4.2 - Number of Students Served in START Project Components

School	N	Tutoring No.	%	Rating	Counselling No.	%	Rating	Social Services No.	%	Rating	Alberta Mental Health No.	%	Rating	Liaison Officer No.	%	Rating	Self Esteem Group No.	%	Rating	Attendance Monitoring No.	%	Rating	Others No.
Hamilton	161	80**	50	N/A	12***	7	4.5	25	16	4.5	5	3	4.5	25	16	4.5	7	4	5	-	-	-	88
Paterson	94	65**	69	N/A	65	69	5.0	21	22	N/A	29	31	N/A	23	25	5	19	19	5	-	-	-	152
Wilson	136	77	70	N/A	40	29	4.0	-	-	-	-	-	-	10	7	5	-	-	-	-	-	-	43
Watson	47	-	-	-	47	100	4.0	-	-	-	-	-	-	47	100	5	-	-	-	47	100	4.0	50
Teen Mom	29	-	-	-	9	31	4.0	2	7	N/A	-	-	-	5	17	N/A	-	-	-	29	100	4.0	
All	438	222	51	4.0**	173	39	4.4	48	11	4.5	34	8	4.5	110	25	4.9	25	6	5	76	17	4.0	333

* Ratings are on a 5-point scale where 1 = low and 5 = high. ** Evaluator's estimate. The number and rating were not reported.
*** Very high risk group. N/A = Not reported.

Table 4.3 - Number of Students Served and Success Ratings for "Other Components" in Table 4.2

School	N	Native Girls Support No.	%	Rating	Aggression Group No.	%	Rating	Community-School Involvement No.	%	Rating	Native Crafts No.	%	Rating	Incentive Program No.	%	Rating	Attention Deficit Program No.	%	Rating	Final Exam Preparation No.	%	Rating
Hamilton	161	10	6	3.5	6	4	4.5	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	7	4	4.0	65	40	4.0
Paterson	94	-	-	-	-	-	-	40	43	4.0	18	19	5	94	100	4.0	-	-	-	-	-	-
School	N	Academic Intervention No.	%	Rating	Peer Support Counselling No.	%	Rating	Parent Support Group No.	%	Rating	Recovery Assistance Program No.	%	Rating	Drug Free Challenge Program No.	%	Rating	Parenting Program No.	%	Rating			
Wilson	136	43	32	4.0	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-			
Watson	47	-	-	-	10	21	2.0	15	32	4.0	5	11	4.0	4	9	3.0	16	34	N/A			

outside agencies were based on counselling sessions. Outside agencies appreciated the information which accompanied referrals. No reduction in counselling was planned for next year. Numbers in Table 4.2 refer to relatively high risk START students.

Alberta Social Services and Mental Health (External Agency Liaison)

Number served - 82

Success rating - 4.5

The school Liaison Officer was frequently involved and the CYCWs were pleased with this assistance. Confidentiality needs deterred clear communication at times. Relationships and mutual respect and understanding had improved considerably since Year 1. There was a need to know earlier about programs provided by outside agencies.

School Liaison Officer

Number served 105

Success rating - 4.9

This service was extremely helpful in liaising with external agencies, the home and in communications and interventions with families. Follow-up about attendance problems was valuable. The School Liaison Officer was a valuable support and source of information.

Self Esteem Groups

Number served - 25

Success rating - 5

These were arranged to provide opportunities to succeed and to receive peer support. This component was integrated with all activities.

Attendance Monitoring and Follow-up

Number served - 76

Success rating - 4.0

Monitoring was a requirement for record keeping for evaluation purposes.

Support Group for Native Girls

Number served - 10

Success rating - 3.5

Community, agency, and native speakers gave presentations and counselled about alcohol and drug abuse, sexuality, dating/rape, school and cultural awareness. Help with transportation was needed.

Aggression Group

Number served - 6

Success rating 4.5

One objective was to teach new skills and develop appropriate attitudes. The main involvement was with Lethbridge City Police. Discussions included assault and the Young Offenders Act. Anger management received attention also.

Community-School Involvement Project

Number served - 40

Success rating - 4.0

This activity was unique to Paterson School. Here pupils helped other members of the community; for example, helping at a Special Needs Shopping Night, volunteering at a hospital and for re-cycling projects. The activities aided in establishing connections between home, school, and the community.

Native Crafts

Number served - 18

Success rating - 5.0

Native liaison worker assisted the CYCW in introducing Native Club students to crafts and native culture. The Club has been a vehicle which helps overcome shyness and enhance personal pride and self-esteem.

Incentive Program

Number served - 94

Success rating - 4.0

Recognition, tokens, certificates, meals, privileges and other positive reinforcements were used as rewards for appropriate behaviour and achievements. Both short-term and longer term incentives were used, all within reach of every student.

Attention Deficit Program

Number served - 7

Success rating - 4.0

The foci were on medication, school, family, peers, and social behaviour, all of which are affected by Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder. The purpose was to help students cope with their affliction and to feel more comfortable with it.

Final Exam Preparation (study skills)

Number served - 65

Success rating - 4.0

Tutors gave students review sheets which identified areas requiring attention. Study notes were provided. Following this the tutors quizzed the students orally and provided remedial instruction, as required.

Academic Intervention Centre

Number served - 43

Success rating - 4.0

This was a supervised pull-out program to help small groups improve academic and social skills. The program worked well with some very high risk pupils. It worked well as a "time-out" for some pupils. The CYCW spent fourteen periods per week at the Centre.

Peer Support Counselling

Number served - 10

Success rating - 2.0

Ten students were trained as peer counsellors prepared to support others, participate in workshops and to orient students. The low rating was due to lack of designated time during school hours.

Parent Support Group

Number served - 15

Success rating - 4.0

About fifteen parents joined the group 12 weeks per year during the evening. They were provided with information, ideas, and strategies for coping with difficult teens. The parents really

seemed to enjoy the guest speakers. More effort was needed to increase attendance and leadership by parents.

Recovery Assistance Program

Number served - 5

Success rating - 4.0

This was a voluntary support group where various skills were taught to assist students in recovering and achieving continued abstinence from substance abuse. Students were provided the opportunity to discuss relapses and feelings, and to receive the support of peers. The program ran 5 days per week, 1 hour per day. There was need for more awareness throughout the District about the program, more advertising and promoting, and more involvement of AADAC.

Drug Free Challenge Program

Number served - 4

Success rating - 3.0

Students who were high risk substance abusers were mandated to attend this program if they wished to continue attending their school. Skills and awareness topics were discussed. One of the strengths was the opportunity to be referred to AADAC or to the Recovery Assistance Program. A weakness was lack of involvement by parents.

Parenting Program

Number served - 16

Success rating - N/A

The parenting class was informational as well as supportive. The objective was to have parents gain from each other as well as from the leader. Individual counselling was always available on request. In addition to counselling, other supports were provided: that is, contacts with Social Services, Mental Health, and Public Health agencies; attendance monitoring, and the School Liaison Officer service. Fifty percent of the course mark was based on attendance.

<u>External Consultants Comments About Interventions</u>

Commendations from personnel in the school district and observations by the consultant lead one to conclude that the Child and Youth Care Workers (CYCWs) continued to exhibit commitment, skill, and leadership in fulfilling the multi-faceted and demanding roles required of them. Continuity and experience were likely

contributing to the fine-tuning of interventions and in addressing needs that required attention. The communications and liaison with teachers and the structuring of tutoring were examples of improvements. Several needs of native pupils were delineated and then addressed. The various incentive programs were expanded and successfully applied principles from behaviourist psychology.

Credit for the successful implementations of interventions was also attributable to other personnel in the project and the school district. The tutors dealt with the most frequently expressed needs of the START students: lack of success in school subjects (last year's survey). Teachers and school administrators were cooperative and helpful. Central Office personnel provided structure, leadership, a medley of complementary support services and contributed to a climate in harmony with the goals of the project.

Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder, a psychoeducational label, was used to identify and provide therapeutic service to a small group at one school. It is noteworthy that communications and reports about Project START have been "label free."

The CYCWs will be employed full time by each of the schools next year. This decision, in times of severe financial constraint, was an indication of the high level of success attributed locally to this component of the project. Tutoring will be reduced to one-half or one-quarter of past levels but will be continued to the extent that funds can be transferred from regular programs, This, too, is an indication of the success attributed to this component by each school.

Outcomes

Outcomes indicators for the Lethbridge School District project during 1993-94 were percentage of school days attended compared to a baseline (pre-project) year, dropout rates, and the current year's status of last year's members.

Percentage of School Days Attended

Table 4.4 displays the average changes in percentage of attendance for Project START members between 1993-94 and their respective baseline years. Over all schools the combined averages for new and continuing project students showed no significant change (+0.2%). Students continuing in the project for the second or third year improved slightly on average (+0.8%), particularly at the Wilson School. Pupils new to the project for 1993-94 showed a small decline in average attendance (-0.3%).

Table 4.4 - Attendance During Baseline Years and 1993-94

School	START Group	Baseline Years N	Baseline Years %	1993-94 N	1993-94 %	Change (%)
Hamilton School (N=161)	Continuing	31	89.5	31	90.5	+1.0
	New	98	91.0	98	90.6	- 0.4
Paterson School (N=94)	Continuing	37	91.7	37	88.3	- 3.4
	New	43	95.0	43	93.4	- 1.6
Wilson School (N=136)	Continuing	61	89.5	61	93.2	+3.7
	New	63	91.0	63	90.9	- 0.1
Watson School (N=47)	Continuing	9	94.6	9	92.2	- 2.4
	New	23	89.8	23	91.2	+1.4
All Schools (N=438)	Continuing	138	90.4	138	91.2	+0.8
	New	227	91.6	227	91.3	- 0.3
All Schools (N=438)	Both	365	91.1	365	91.3	+0.2

Notes: Net changes were computed by subtracting the baseline attendance from the 1993-94 attendance for **the same** pupils. Since data from both years were unavailable for some students the number of cases (N) was reduced accordingly.

Table 4.5 reports the overall average change in attendance percentages for each of the three project years. Averages improved over this interval, ranging from -0.9 percent for Year 1 to +0.2 percent in Year 3. The overall average for the three years was a net decline (-0.4%).

Table 4.5 - Changes in Attendance for START Project Pupils

Year*	Baseline Year Attendance Number	Baseline Year Attendance %	1991-94 Attendance Number	1991-94 Attendance %	Net Change %
1991-92	101**	85.3	101	84.5	- 0.9
1992-93	383	89.9	383	89.2	- 0.7
1993-94	365	91.1	365	91.3	+0.2
All	849	89.9	849	89.5	- 0.4

* Attendance changes were computed for pupils with <u>both</u> baseline and project year records, only.
** Wilson School did not report a baseline year's attendance for Year 1 of the project.

<u>Transfers and Dropouts</u>

Table 4.6 indicates that 53 pupils transferred to other schools during 1993-94 and it was reported that none of them subsequently quit school. The enrolment status for all of the transferees was known by the sending school. Nearly one in eight (12.1%) of the START group transferred during the year.

Table 4.6 - Transfers and Dropouts of START Students During 1993-94

Group and Number of START Pupils	Attending Elsewhere		Quit School: Employed		Quit School: Unemployed		Quit School: Status unknown		Total	
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
Hamilton: Continuing (41)	10	24.4	-	-	-	-	-	-	10	24.4
New (120)	21	17.5	-	-	-	-	-	-	21	17.5
Paterson: Continuing (42)	5	9.6	-	-	-	-	-	-	5	9.6
New (52)	5	11.9	-	-	-	-	-	-	5	11.9
Wilson: Continuing (68)	7	10.3	-	-	-	-	-	-	7	10.3
New (68)	3	4.4	-	-	-	-	-	-	3	4.4
Watson: Continuing (11)	1	9.1	-	-	-	-	1	9.1	2	18.2
New (36)	1	2.8	-	-	1	2.8	3	8.3	5	13.9
Totals: Continuing (162)	23	14.2	-	-	-	-	1	0.6	24	14.8
New (276)	30	10.9	-	-	1	0.4	3	1.1	34	12.3
All Schools (N=438)	53	12.1	-	-	1	0.2	4	0.9	58	13.2

Dropouts numbered five (1.1%) during 1993-94 and were reported as occurring only at the Integrated Occupational Program (IOP) School (Allan Watson). According to figures in Table 4.6 no students who left school were known to be employed, one was known to be unemployed, and, for four, employment status was not known.

Table 4.7 shows that, over the three year term of the project, the proportion of START project members who were reported as school leavers declined from 6.0 percent in Year 1 to 1.1 percent in Year 3. Table 4.7 also indicates that the overall average for the three years was 2.7 percent classified as dropouts.

Table 4.7 - Transfers and Dropouts Over Three Years

Year	N	Attending Elsewhere		Quit School: Employed		Quit School: Unemployed		Quit School: Not Traceable		Total*	
		N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
1991-92	183**	66	25.2***	-	-	5	2.7	6	3.2	11	6.0
1992-93	478	63	13.2	7	1.5	2	0.4	6	1.3	15	3.1
1993-94	438	53	12.1	-	-	1	0.2	4	0.9	5	1.1
Total	1099	182	16. 0	7	0.6	8	0.7	16	1.4	31	2.7

* It was assumed that students who could not be traced had quit school.
** During the year 225 pupils were officially designated as START participants; however, an extra 140 were added during the year. Missing data from one school deflated the N for calculations in the "Quit School" category to 183.
*** This percentage is based on a total of 262 pupils. One school included the added students in their calculations.

Follow-up on Previous Years' START Students

Commencing in Year 2, medium-term outcome data were gathered which

took the form of the follow-up status of those enrolled in the Year 1 START Project. Somewhat different criteria were applied in Year 3 to gather this information for those enrolled in the previous year. As a consequence, comparisons of the two sets of data are not appropriate.

Table 4.8 displays the status of the 1992-93 START group at Lethbridge as of the end of 1993-94. The District totals show that 25 could not be followed up; however, it was known that 11 of these had left school. The total number of dropouts, therefore was 29, or 6.1 percent, and of these, 4 (0.8%) were employed and 14 (2.9%) were unemployed.

Table 4.8 - Follow-up of 1992-93 Project START Pupils

School	Number of Pupils	Continued in START		In Regular School		Dropped out Employed		Dropped out Unemployed		Transferred Elsewhere		Follow-up Not Possible	
		N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
Hamilton	138	28	20.4	26	18.8	-	-	-	-	84	61.3	-	-
Paterson	108	37	34.3	5	4.6	2	2.0	-	-	64	59.3	3**	3.0
Wilson	119	67	49.6	9	6.7	-	-	7	5.2	52	38.5	-	-
Watson	113	9	8.0	46	40.7	2	1.8	7	6.2	27*	23.9	22***	19.5
All Schools	478	141	29.5	86	18.0	4	0.8	14	2.9	227	47.5	25	5.2

* Six of these students graduated. ** These three dropped out but their employment status was unknown.
*** Eleven were known to have dropped out but their employment status was unknown.

If a worst-case scenario is applied, the 25 for whom follow-up was not possible, could be added to the 14 who dropped out, unemployed, making a total of 39 (8.2%). This would be an indication of the size of the 1992-93 group for whom the START program had been unsuccessful.

External Evaluators' Comments on Outcomes

The proportion of START Project members leaving school seems low relative to other projects. Over the three-year period notable improvements in this indicator were recorded since the percentage declined from 6.0 percent to 1.1 percent. The medium-term indicator used was the dropout number for those enrolled in the project in the previous year. This proportion, at a maximum value of 8.9%,(0.8% + 2.9% + 5.2% in Table 4.8), also seems low compared to figures for other projects. These proportions warrant the conclusion that a main objective for the project, retention in school, has been quite successfully achieved in Project Connections.

The project appeared to have little positive impact on percent of days attended. Part of the reason may well be that, for some

groups, the baseline year percentage of attendance was relatively high. Also, as high-risk pupils in conventional programs advance in age their attendance tends to decline. An intervention that produced no change, therefore, would be considered mildly successful because the expected decrease in attendance had been counteracted.

As noted in the comments following the Interventions section, local perceptions and judgments about Project Connections are very positive. As observed there, proof of this widespread support for the work of the CYCW personnel and the tutors are the decisions taken by staffs in the four junior high schools to continue to support their work by using school funds transferred from other programs.

High Level Public School

School: High Level Public School

Personnel: Perry Moulton, Vice-Principal and Project Supervisor
Mark Harding, Project Coordinator and START Teacher
Judy Vogel, START Teacher

Rationale

The rationale for the START project conducted in the High Level Public School has not been changed since it was presented in 1991. Over the years the drop-out rate had been unacceptably high, so that by grade 12 about 66% of the students had quit school, with most of them leaving while in the high school grades. Past programs to combat premature school leaving had not been effective, and in addition some of the stakeholders in the community still had rather negative attitudes toward education. A new approach, therefore, was needed. New measures, as stated in the START proposal, to improve retention in school were designed to focus on younger students, rather than on senior high school students about to drop out. Additional resources were needed, as opposed to reallocation of those already available.

Improved proficiency in Language Arts and Mathematics was proposed as the key to improvement in self-esteem and attitudes toward school, and these would all combine to produce higher achievement scores and reduced dropout rates. This focus remained in place through the 1993-94 school year because the results of the first two years of the High Level START Project were encouraging with respect to both achievement standards and retention rates.

Background Factors

The emphasis in the START Project at High Level School was on upgrading academic performance, but this also involved maintaining a high percentage of attendance and improving self esteem. The long-range goal of having START students return to regular classes remained in place.

The general procedure over the three years was to remove the START students from regular classes in Mathematics and/or Language and to place them in a separate room. In this situation teachers were better able to provide instruction geared to the special needs of the students. In 1993-94 the program was expanded to include such features as peer support, and also to assist a few students who have proceeded to high school.

In the 1993-94 school year there were two full-time teaching positions supported by the START Project. School Division support of the third position was withdrawn at the end of June, 1993. As

a result, the number of students in the program was considerably less than it was in the previous year. In September of 1992, 80 students were included in the Project, but in the fall of 1993 the number was only 53.

Background Characteristics of Pupils

Table 5.1 shows the enrolment by grade and also indicates how many of the students were continuing and how many were new.

Table 5.1 - Enrolment of START Pupils During 1993-94

Grade	Group	Fall		Spring	
		Number	%	Number	%
6	Continuing	8	15.1	8	21.0
6	New	8	15.1	6	15.8
7	Continuing	8	15.1	6	15.8
7	New	8	15.1	6	15.8
8	Continuing	7	13.2	6	15.8
8	New	4	7.5	1	2.6
9	Continuing	2	3.8	2	5.3
9	New	4	7.5	1	2.6
10	Continuing	-	-	-	-
10	New	4	7.5	2	5.3
All	Continuing	25	47.2	22	57.9
All	New	28	52.8	16	42.1
Total		53	100	38	100

Table 5.1 indicates a shift in emphasis from 1992-93. First of all, no new Grade 5 students were placed in the START program. The reason for this was that the Grade 5 students, in 1993-94, were in another building, making it very difficult to include them in the special program. Grade 6 and 7 students made up the largest proportion of the group in 1993-94; Grade 6 students made up 36.8 percent of the total group, and Grade 7 students made up 31.6 percent. Major changes were, first, the substantial increase in the proportion of Grade 6 pupils, from 17.6%, in 1992-93 to 36.8 percent in 1993-94, secondly, the reduction in the proportion of Grade 9 students, from 15.1 percent in 1992-93 to 7.9 percent in 1993-94, and, finally, the inclusion of some Grade 10 students in the Project.

By comparing Fall to Spring enrolments in Table 5.1 it can be concluded that more of the New students transferred or dropped out than did those in the Continuing group.

External Evaluators' Comments on Background Factors

Although a few Grade 10 students benefitted from START in 1993-94, and Grade 5 students were no longer included, the target pupils were mainly in the lower grades, as was the case in previous years. In 1993-94, 67.5 percent of the students in the project, at year-end, were in Grades 6 and 7, while in June of 1993 students in Grades 5 - 7 made up 67.7 percent of the total group. This was in keeping with the philosophy expressed in the rationale that interventions intended to reduce the dropout rate should begin early.

Interventions

As mentioned earlier, the interventions were expanded as compared to those in previous years. Also, the pattern was changed somewhat. Previously, there were two distinct levels of START based on the degree to which students achieved below their age group levels. This was not the case in 1993-94. Adaptation of instruction to different ability levels was achieved within the classes. Another significant change was the assistance given to a few Grade 10 students who were not participants in the regular START program. Instead of meeting with the special "pull out" classes in Language Arts and Mathematics, arrangements were made for them to participate in Work Experience.

Components

Descriptions and ratings of the components, submitted by the START personnel, are given below.

Language Arts

Students Served - 37

Overall Rating - 4

Students were first referred by home room teachers for possible inclusion in the START group. They were then assessed, using standardized Language tests. Those who were selected were then taken out of the regular Language classes and placed in a separate classroom where they received instruction suitable for their individual levels of achievement. The students also had access to six computer terminals, purchased with START Project funds, and CML software which was purchased by the school system. This service was provided to 27 students in Grades 6 - 9, and one of the Grade 10 students, who were in the START Project for the full year.

Mathematics

Students Served - 33

Overall Rating - 4

Procedures for START Mathematics were similar to those used in Language Arts, including the method of selection and the method of instruction, which involved computer applications. A total of 20 students in Grades 6 - 9, and one Grade 10 student, were served for the full year through this component.

Games Club

Students Served - N/A

Overall Rating - 4

A noon hour drop in club sponsored and run by START teachers was established. Students played board games and socialized as they ate lunch. Both Project and non-Project students had access to this activity.

Peer Support

Students Served - 12

Overall Rating - 4

The purpose of this activity was to give moral support, to increase assertiveness and self-confidence, and to improve listening and speaking skills. Grade 6 and 7 students, only, were involved because interest could not be generated amongst the older students.

Work Experience

Students Served - 4

Work experience placements were made for a few (4) academically weak high school students. Half of the students' time was spent in this activity, and the other half in high school classes (except for one student who spent one quarter of her time engaged in START activities). Two of these students were paid for their time on the job because of their recognized value to their employers.

Tutoring

Students Served - 13

Overall Rating - 5

This component had two phases, one of which involved two students

who were given special one-on-one assistance on a continuing basis. One was an ESL student in Grade 8 and the other was a Grade 10 student with some physical disabilities. The second phase consisted of an informal referral for students who were having difficulty in some aspect of Language Arts or Mathematics. Students tended to be in and out as their needs dictated.

External Evaluators' Comments on Interventions

Despite the reduction in START staff the Project components were revised and expanded. This was made possible partly by employing computers to assist in the instruction of Language Arts and Mathematics and partly by excluding Grade 5 students from the program which reduced the number of students being served. The computers were received with great enthusiasm by the students. The START Project operated effectively despite the problems caused by extensive renovations made to the school.

Three of the Grade 10 students received important, but limited, assistance from START staff. Their placements for Work Experience were arranged by a START teacher (Mr. Harding), but beyond that the students required minimal attention from him.

The atmosphere in the START classroom (one room is used simultaneously by the two teachers) in relaxed and businesslike. Students can be left on their own, whether working on a computer or at desk work, while the teacher attends to others.

The external evaluator concurs with the overall ratings given, with the possible exception of the Language and Mathematics components. The ratings could very well have been 5, rather than 4, in each case.

Outcomes

Success of the High Level START Program was gauged by the criteria of changes in attendance, dropouts, and achievement as measured by the Stanford Diagnostic Mathematics and Reading test, administered in the fall and again in the spring of the 1993-94 school year.

Attendance

Table 5.2 shows the attendance figures for the baseline years (1990-91 or 1991-92 for the Continuing students, and 1992-93 for the New students) and for 1993-94. For the Continuing group the attendance improved by 4.7 percent, and for the New students the improvement was 0.5 percent. Overall, the gain was 3.0 percent. The table also shows that the attendance figures for 1993-94 were quite respectable, with the exception of the New Grade 6 students. Overall the attendance was 93.3 percent, but for the 6 new students in Grade 6 it was only 83.6 percent.

Table 5.2 - Percentage of School Days Attended

Grade	Group	Number of Students Total	N/A*	Days Attended Baseline Year (%)	1993-94 (%)	Change (%)
6	Continuing	8	0	87.0	91.5	+4.5
6	New	6	1	83.4	83.6	+0.2
7	Continuing	6	0	89.8	97.3	+7.5
7	New	6	0	94.2	95.3	+1.1
8	Continuing	6	0	91.8	96.2	+4.4
8	New	4	3	97.0	97.0	0
9	Continuing	2	0	97.5	95.0	- 2.5
9	New	4	3	90.0	91.0	+1.0
10	New	4	3	100	99.0	- 1.0
All	Continuing	22	0	90.0	94.7	+4.7
All	New	24	10	90.7	91.2	+0.5
All	Both	46	10	90.3	93.3	+3.0

* N/A indicates the number of students who transferred, withdrew, or for whom baseline data were not available

Figures in Table 5.3 indicate that there was a gain in attendance for each of the three years of the Project, and that the average gain over the years was 6.4 percent. It should be mentioned, also, that the average attendance of the project pupils was quite good (93.6%).

Table 5.3 - Changes in Attendance for START Project Pupils

Year	Baseline Year Attendance Number	%	Attendance Number	%	Net Change %
1991-92	28	83.5	28	89.4	+5.9
1992-93	56	86.5	56	96.0	+9.5
1993-94	46	90.3	46	93.3	+3.0
All	130	87.2	130	93.6	+6.4

Transfers and Dropouts

Figures related to transfers and dropouts for 1993-94 are shown in Table 5.4. In all there were 4 dropouts (7.6%), one of whom obtained employment. Regarding unemployed dropouts, there was one from each of Grades 8, 9, and 10. Of the 53 students in the Project in 1993-94, 11 (20.8%) transferred to another school.

Table 5.4 - Transfers and Dropouts of START Project Students During 1993-94

Grade	Group	Attending Elsewhere N	Attending Elsewhere %*	Quit School: Employed N	Employed %	Unemployed N	Unemployed %	Unknown N	Unknown %	Total N	Total %
6	Continuing	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
6	New	2	3.8	-	-	-	-	-	-	2	3.8
7	Continuing	3	5.7	-	-	-	-	-	-	3	5.7
7	New	2	3.8	-	-	-	-	-	-	2	3.8
8	Continuing	1	1.9	-	-	1	1.9	-	-	2	3.8
8	New	2	3.8	-	-	-	-	-	-	2	3.8
9	Continuing	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
9	New	1	1.9	-	-	1	1.9	-	-	2	3.8
10	Continuing	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
10	New	-	-	1	1.9	1	1.9	-	-	2	3.8
All	Continuing	4	7.6	-	-	1	1.9	-	-	5	9.4
	New	7	13.2	1	1.9	2	3.8	-	-	10	18.9
All	Both	11	20.8	1	1.9	3	5.7	-	-	15	28.3

* All percentages are based on a total of 53 students.

Table 5.5 - Transfers and Dropouts of START Project Students

Year	N	Attending Elsewhere N	Attending Elsewhere %	Quit School: Employed N	Employed %	Unemployed N	Unemployed %	Not Traceable* N	Not Traceable* %	Total N	Total %
1991-92	65	25	38.5	-	-	2	3.1	-	-	2	3.1
1992-93	80	11	13.8	-	-	8	10.0	1	1.3	9	11.3
1993-94	53	11	20.8	1	1.9	3	5.7	-	-	4	7.5
Total	198	47	23.7	1	0.5	13	6.6	1	0.5	15	7.6

* It was assumed that all students who were not traceable had quit school

Table 5.5 provides a summary of transfers and dropouts for the three years of the START project. The figures indicate that, over the years, there was a high turnover of students. In the first year, 25 students (38.5%) transferred, while in Year 2 and Year 3 the numbers were 11 (13.8%) and 11 (20.8%), respectively. Over the years, 15 students (7.6%) quit school, and of these, only one was known to be employed. The dropout rate for 1993-94 was inflated, in comparison to the rates of the first two years of the project, because there were no Grade 5 students in the project in Year 3. The result was that a larger proportion of students could leave school legally in 1993-94. None of the dropouts in Year 3 were below the legal age for leaving school, which was an improvement over the previous year.

Table 5.6 gives follow-up information on the students who were in the START Project at High Level during 1992-93. In all there were 80 students, of which 23 (28.8%) continued in the Project and 24 (30.0%) returned to regular school classes. Thirteen students (16.3%) quit school, and only one found employment. Of the 20 students listed as Transferred or No Follow-up Possible, 12 had transferred out of the area but it could not be determined whether or not they continued in school.

Table 5.6 - Follow-up of 1992-93 START Project Pupils

Continued in START		Attending Regular School		Quit School				Transferred or No Follow-up Possible		Total	
				Employed		Unemployed					
N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
23	28.8	24	30.0	1	1.3	12	15.0	20	25.0	80	100

Academic Achievement

START Project students (excepting those in Grade 10) in High Level School were given the Stanford Diagnostic Test of Reading and Mathematics in late September, 1993, and again in late May of 1994. Table 5.7 shows the results of the tests.

Table 5.7 - Results of Stanford Mathematics and Reading Test in Grade Equivalents

Grade	N	Mathematics Grade Equivalents			N	Reading Grade Equivalents		
		Fall	Spring	Change		Fall	Spring	Change
6	7	3.64	5.41	+1.77	10	3.48	4.51	+1.03
7	5	4.08	5.58	+1.50	11	4.33	5.60	+1.27
8	5	5.10	6.66	+1.56	3	5.03	7.07	+2.04
9	3	5.50	7.23	+1.73	3	7.36	7.90	+0.54
All	20	---	---	+1.64	27	---	---	+1.19
All	13	All Continuing Students		+1.53	19	All Continuing Students		+0.87
	7	All New Students		+1.86	8	All New Students		+1.83

The interval between the pretests and post tests (8 months) indicated that an average change of 0.8 grade equivalents would be expected in a normal class. It must be noted that, over the years prior to entering START, the gains for the students averaged well below the normal 1.0 grade equivalents per year. For example, the 7 students in Grade 6 had an average grade equivalent standing of 3.64 in Mathematics at the beginning of their baseline years after five years of schooling (or more because of failures). An average class would have had a grade equivalent of 6.1. In Mathematics the average gain of 1.64 across the grades was well in excess of expectations based on previous years. In Reading the average gain was 1.19 grade equivalents and was well above expectations at all levels except Grade 9. While achievement levels were raised, it

must be noted that they remained below the norms for each of the grades; for example, in Mathematics the average grade equivalent in June, 1994 for Grade 9 START students was 7.23, but the expected average (the norm) for Grade 9 students in May is 9.8).

Table 5.7 gives a summary of the results of achievement testing over the three years of the START Project. For Mathematics the

Table 5.7 - Summary of Results of Achievement Testing Over Three Years

Year	Mathematics N	Progress in Grade Equivalents/Year Baseline**	Project***	Increase****	Reading N	Progress in Grade Equivalents/ Year Baseline	Project	Increase
1991-92*	26	0.61	1.83	1.22	26	0.46	1.71	1.25
1992-93	45	0.64	1.78	1.14	40	0.86	1.56	0.70
1993-94	20	0.64	1.73	1.09	27	0.83	1.25	0.42

* Tests results for 1991-92 are not entirely comparable with results for the other two years of the START Project. In 1991-92 the Test of Written Language (TOWL2) and the Kaufman Test of Educational Achievement (for Mathematics) were administered. The first testing was done in September, 1991 and the second in February 1992, with an interval of only 4.75 months between the two. In 1992-93 and 1993-94 the Stanford Diagnostic Test of Mathematics and Reading was administered in September and in June. The interval between the two testing sessions was 9.5 months.
** Baseline rate = grade equivalent ÷ years in school.
*** Project rate = grade equivalent gain ÷ portion of year between testing periods.
**** Increase = project year grade equivalent minus baseline year grade equivalent.

gain was 1.83 grade equivalents in 1991-92 (if the gain of 0.87 grade equivalents in the 4.75-month period for Year 1 was sustained for the full year). Similarly, for Reading the gain was calculated to be 1.71 grade equivalents for the full year.

External Consultant's Comments on Outcomes

The encouraging improvements observed in the first two years of the START Project at High Level continued in 1993-94. The improvement in attendance was not great (3.0%); however, the average attendance in 1993-94 was very good (93.3%), making large gains impossible.

The transfer rate during the year, and over the three years, was high, reflecting the tendency of people to move elsewhere when job situations are volatile. The number of students that actually dropped out, however, was quite low.

Achievement data were very encouraging. The high rate of gain set in the first year was indeed sustained for the next two years. The increase in grade equivalent scores in each of the three years was approximately double the increases the students had experienced in their previous years of schooling. At each grade level, however, the year-end achievement level remained below the levels set by the norms. At the Grade 9 level the average achievement for 1993-94 in both Mathematics and Reading was more than two grade equivalents

below the norm value of 9.8. It must be mentioned that the selection procedures tended to inflate the gains. Selecting students on the basis of test data, then retesting at the end of the year, opens the door to apparent gains resulting from a "regression to the mean" effect. This is caused by the fact that chance factors (bad luck) made some of the low achievers appear even worse. In the retest at least some of the students would have had better luck causing an increase in the mean score of the group.

Follow-up data on the 1992-93 START students were also encouraging. While there were students who dropped out without being employed (7.0%), the great majority continued in school during 1993-94.

Reducing the number of START teachers from 3 in 1992-93 to 2 in 1993-94 no doubt caused the curtailment of the number of people served. It was no longer feasible to include Grade 5 students in the project because they were in another building. The introduction of computer assisted instruction, however, made it possible to maintain a good level of service to the students.

The success of the START Project at High Level was attributable in large part to the organization and planning by the supervisors and to the competence and dedication of the teachers.

Lakeland RCS School District No. 150

Supervisor in Charge: Ken Loose

School: Assumption Junior-Senior High School, Grande Centre

Classroom Aide and Instructional Assistant: Sandi Beaudoin

Title of Project: Success Oriented Students

Rationale

Reducing the incidence of early school leaving by assisting at-risk students is a never ending process which requires involvement and commitment by all concerned. Project START represents an initial step toward this goal. The Project was designed to serve the needs of native students as well as non-natives.

Background Factors

Assumption Junior-Senior High School at Grand Centre provided service to over 250 students, in grades 7 through 12. In addition to the START Project staff, students also benefited from the services of a half-time guidance counsellor and a part-time Native home/school liaison worker. The regular junior high school program was offered as well as the senior high school Advanced and General Diploma programs.

For year 1 and year 2 of Project START, school staff (counsellor, teachers, native home-school liaison worker, etc.) was increased by recruiting START funded project personnel as follows, in terms of Full Time Equivalents (FTE):

Teacher Coordinator (1 FTE)
Instructional Assistant (0.8 FTE)
Community Tutors (0.6 FTE) (Redeployed as in-school tutors)

For year 3 of the START Project at Assumption School, staff was reduced to an Instructional Assistant (1.0 FTE) and the Teacher Coordinator (part time). Major duties for the latter were transferred to teaching Grade 9 classes (populated, in part, by START pupils who have historically been very troublesome in class).

Background Characteristics of Pupils

Table 6.1 indicates that, for 1993-94, 59 pupils were designated as Project START members. Sixteen of these (28%) were continuing students who were enroled as project members last year. More than seventy percent were junior high school students and nearly all of the remainder were in Grade 10.

Table 6.1 - Enrolment and Baseline Year's Attendance of START Students

Grade	Group	Enrolment No.	Enrolment %	Baseline Year's Attendance No.	Baseline Year's Attendance %	No Data
7	New	6	10.2	3	95.0	3
8	Continuing	5	8.5	5	92.0	-
	New	3	5.1	2	91.0	1
9	Continuing	5	8.5	4	87.3	1
	New	23	39.0	18	86.5	5
10	Continuing	5	8.5	5	83.4	-
	New	10	16.9	8	84.6	2
11	Continuing	1	1.7	1	90.0	-
	New	-	-	-	-	-
12	Continuing	-	-	-	-	-
	New	1	1.7	-	-	1
All	Continuing	16	27.1	15	87.7	1
	New	43	72.9	31	87.1	12
All	All	59	100	46	87.3	13

The largest sub-group recorded in Table 6.1 was the twenty-three pupils in Grade 9 (39.6% of the total) designated as new to the project. Several reasons for selecting these students were communicated in letters received at mid-year from the principal and the project coordinator:

> . . . . As you are aware, there has been a group move up through the system who have demanded an extra amount of teacher time and ingenuity. In Year 1 of the Project they were in Grade 7 and a significant amount of time of START personnel was devoted to support for the teacher working with those students. In the second year the eighth grade received more attention. The attention is now on the ninth grade and the coordinator was moved into a more direct role at the classroom level . . . . (Coordinator, Feb. 5, 1994).

> . . . . We want to be able to influence students in Grade 9 as this is where many begin to consider dropping out to be a viable alternative in their lives. Statistics show that native students are more likely to become early school leavers than are non-natives. Our Grade 9 classes have the highest ratio of native students in our school, and the largest number of at-risk pupils. We have scheduled Mr. Loose's teaching time to allow him to be predominately with the Grade 9 classes. We believe that at the present time this is the highest need area in our school (Principal, January, 19, 1994).

External Consultants' Comments About Background Factors

Additional reasons for selecting START students were communicated at mid-year by Assumption School. If reasons had been required in the report for Year 3, attributes such as "lack of studiousness" and "recalcitrance" might have been used in describing the twenty-three newcomers to the Project registered in Grade 9. Traits such as these coupled with "low motivation for academic subjects" (the reason ranked fourth at Assumption last year) were likely predictors for dropping out of school.

Since the Grade 9 classes were so difficult to teach, project planners sought approval to change the staff complement and roles significantly. Approval was received from the federal funding agency to dispense with the tutors (0.6 FTE) and most of the coordination and counselling roles of the teacher-coordinator. The latter was to focus mainly on providing academic instruction to the two Grade 9 classes in the school. Presumably regular teaching staff and operating costs would be reduced accordingly.

These changes indicated that project planners had concluded that day-to-day teaching was very important in reducing the number of students who dropped out.

The external consultants concur with this conclusion. Since students spend most of their school day in structured classroom situations what happens there and what is achieved are extremely important. If success in school subjects is to be experienced and bonding with peers, staff, and school is to occur then the teaching must create the appropriate climate and must be effective.

Interventions

The START Project at Assumption School was reported at year-end 1993-94 as comprised of the components described below. All descriptions and ratings were contributed by START personnel.

Components

Academic Assistance

Number served - 59

Success rating - 4.7

The teacher aide was able to work in all junior high classes. The teacher coordinator of the START Program was scheduled to teach in the highest-need classes in the school. Materials and software were purchased with START funds.

The transparency of the program meant that at-risk students were

mixed with others. Many students received occasional help and support in the process of helping at risk students. These occasional or incidental recipients were not reported. It was felt that the support they received helped to prevent many of them from becoming at risk.

Classroom Assistance for Teachers

Number served - 40

Success rating - 4.6

The teacher aide provided clerical assistance to the junior high teachers. This allowed the classroom teachers more time to work directly with those students who needed the extra assistance. The aide also provided extra help to students in the classroom.

The teacher aide provided one-on-one assistance with students in Language Arts, Mathematics and Social Studies who were in the modified program and also those in the regular program. She also worked with groups of from three to twelve students at a time where she instructed, assisted, and marked Mathematics assignments. Every student in the school had the opportunity to receive tutoring at lunch time. The last period of the day was an option from which students could be excused to attend tutoring. A normal group was approximately 4 students but there were occasionally as many as 15 in a tutoring session.

High School Mentoring

Number served - 11

Success rating - 4.5

Eight eligible high school students were scheduled to work with at-risk junior high homerooms. They provided academic assistance in Mathematics, Language Arts, and Social Studies. The school counsellor assumed responsibility for coordinating this program. High School Special Project credits were earned for mentoring.

Off-Campus Work Study Program

Number served - 5

Success rating - 3.0

During the year five students were involved, but depending on their interest from year to year this could range as high as 12 - 15 students. When START ceases, the responsibility for this program will be passed to a teacher or administrator. The cooperating employers were still willing to continue and some volunteered to come to the school occasionally to teach specialized topics.

Promotion of School Spirit

Number served - 59

Success rating - 3.5

In all sports at the junior high level, "B" teams were formed. This would not have been possible without the school van lease. Also, more students were involved in school sports as a result of the ability to transport students to and from practices. The teacher aide assumed a great deal of responsibility for ensuring that motivational posters and bulletin boards were put up and changed regularly. A "Caught Being Good" award was instituted using START funds to purchase prizes and incentives. There was also a Success Oriented Students (SOS) bulletin board which was used so that all of the students could be success oriented.

As well as those activities included in the previous reports, there were picnics, movies, and ski trips for the entire school. Such activities allowed interaction between students and teachers at a level quite different from normal classroom activities.

Food Booth

Number served - 55

Success rating - 4.9

A morning muffin program was instituted in order to ensure that all of the students started the day off well nourished. This program was later expanded to include a hot lunch program. It was coordinated by a teacher and hired concession staff. It was not only self-sustaining but generated revenue for the school.

Native Awareness

Number served - 59

Success rating - 3.8

There were classes aimed at the native students. They spoke Cree where they could and sometimes wore identifying clothing. The component included native awareness days, native cultural activities and entertainers, and bannock sales at the concession booth. The native liaison worker assumed most of the responsibility for the success of this component. Plans for the future included getting a native dance group going as well as a fiddling band.

Identification and Monitoring of At-Risk Students

Number served - 59

Success rating - Not reported

Members of staff all became familiar with the various indicators of at-risk behaviour. Together with administration and counsellors they identified target students in the school. The teachers and clerical staff assumed responsibility for monitoring and tracking attendance and academic progress. The Columbia School System software was used to generate individual reports as needed.

Counselling

Number served - 59

Success rating - 4.9

The coordinator had reduced time in 1993-94 for counselling; however, the START assistant had taken courses and workshops on peer support, Fetal Alcohol Syndrome, conflict resolution, anger management, dysfunctional families, suicide prevention, and crisis counselling. She maintained a good rapport with students and was available at many times for formal or informal talks with students. She worked to improve students listening techniques and also functioned as a mediator between students and other students or staff members. In that role she was able to resolve many conflicts without administration being involved.

Enrichment

Number served - Not reported

Success rating - Not reported

The teacher aide became involved with assisting the junior high teachers in the implementation of a project-based enrichment program. She also provided assistance with supervision of field trips to such places as the public library, science displays, etc. The availability of the van also made such experiences possible and affordable.

Study Skills Instruction

Students served - 59

Success rating - 4.5

Teachers used START resources to implement a study skills program. The vice-principal was responsible for meeting with teachers to ensure implementation. The program was available from Curriculum Associates Inc., 5 Esquire Road, North Billerica, MO., USA, 01862-2589, telephone 1-800-354-2665. The series is called "Skills for School Success." Teachers met once a month to review and evaluate strategies used to teach regular assignments and to integrate the

strategies. Students were better prepared and more on task.

Career Awareness

Number served - 59

Success rating - Not reported

Career awareness was continued in various ways such as bulletin board displays, literature, classroom discussion, assignments, and guest speakers.

Peer Support

Number served - 11

Success rating - 4.0

The school coordinator for peer support, in 1993-94, was the START assistant. She worked with the Peer Support worker from Family and Community Support Services (FCSS). The group met once a week. The Peer Support group ran a mural contest and two of the START students won the contest and were recognized by the entire student body. The group also ran a "role model" program in which students nominated other students for being good role models. The START Assistant had taken some peer support training and trained students to help other students by developing listening and counselling techniques. Her training through START professional development funds enabled her to receive the training needed to be very effective in this role.

Communications (Newsletter)

Number served - 59

Success rating - Not reported

The newsletter continued to be a valuable communication device. The proportion delivered to the homes by students was a concern and for a while an entry form for a draw was included. If a student returned the form signed by a parent he or she became eligible for a credit at the food booth. Other items in the newsletter included the permission form that allowed students to go to the year-end picnic.

<u>External Consultants' Comments About Interventions</u>

The START Project interventions at Assumption School were unique since they were almost totally integrated with service to non-START pupils. The school applied the resources provided by the project to benefit any student requiring assistance, not delimiting the support to only those designated as START Project members.

Examples of major interventions which provided assistance to non-START pupils were the classroom aide and regular Grade 9 teaching components of the project.

A rationale for not differentiating between project and non-project pupils was communicated in all reports and interviews. One aspect was the intention to maintain the "transparency" of the project (so that project members could not be identified as being singled out for special help). Another reason given was the assumption that assistance to non-START students would help prevent future difficulties and that this was congruent with the major goals of the project. It was expected that many features of the project would continue without special funding since the school staff and administration had all been active contributors to Project activities. The Project was an integral part of school operations during all three years of its tenure. With respect to this integration and to the future the teacher coordinator's mid-year report ended as follows:

> I believe that the initiatives will continue after the program terminates, but more important than that is the understanding the entire staff has developed as a result of the focus the project has given. . . . That understanding and the new attitudes that have developed will continue to influence the school.

The phenomena described above are one set of practices which sometimes appeared during the implementation of innovations. The research in this area noted that, in various degrees, schools tend to do the following: a) appropriate innovative project resources; b) re-invent, change and adapt the innovation to fit local priorities; and c) if local modifications are made, to retain and institutionalize the new practices and procedures (Rogers, 1983, Berman & McLaughlin, 1978). One adoption model lists integration as a final stage in the institutionalization of an innovation (Hall, et al, 1975, Miller & Seller, 1985). Since this stage had been reached by the staff at Assumption, only the will by the school district to provide the necessary resources is required to ensure the continuation of the project.

The Classroom Aide is a necessary resource. She assumed the lion's share of the non-teaching tasks during Year 3 of Project START at Assumption School. Her duties were performed with a high level of proficiency. Her experience with the project and the numerous inservice programs she attended yielded dividends in the project's final year. The school was fortunate in having her services and those of the teacher-coordinator. Both were highly committed and skilful in the performance of their duties.

Outcomes

The results attributable to the START Project at Assumption School were percentage of days attended, compared to a baseline year's level, and dropouts from school. A medium term outcome indicator was the current (1993-94) status of last year's START group.

Attendance

Table 6.2 shows the attendance changes compared to a baseline year for each of the three years of implementation. The change was positive in Year 1 (+7.8%) but showed losses thereafter: declines of 0.7 percent and 2.1 percent for Year 2 and Year 3, respectively. It must be noted, however, that the percentage attendance for years 2 and 3 was higher than that for year 1. This applied to figures for both the baseline year and the project year.

Table 6.2 - Changes in Attendance for START Project Pupils

Year	Baseline Year Attendance Number*	%	1991-94 Attendance Number	%	Net Change %
1991-92	21	76.9	21	84.7	+7.8
1992-93	30	87.6	30	86.9	- 0.7
1993-94	39	88.0	39	85.9	- 2.1
All	90	85.3	90	85.9	+0.6

* Number of people for whom BOTH baseline attendance and project year attendance were available AND who had completed a full year of school (dropouts and transfers were excluded).

Transfers and Dropouts

Transfers and dropouts from the START groups at Assumption School during each of the three years of the project are reported in Table 6.3. The average dropout rate for this period was 12.3 percent.

Table 6.3 - Transfers and Dropouts of START Project Students

Year	N	Attending Elsewhere N	%	Quit School: Employed N	%	Unemployed N	%	Not Traceable N	%	Total* N	%
1991-92	40	7	16.7	-	-	5	12.5	-	-	5	12.5
1992-93	55	5	9.1	2	3.6	4	7.3	3	5.5	9	16.4
1993-94	59	6	10.2	1	1.7	3	5.1	1	1.7	5	8.5
Total	154	18	11.7	3	1.9	12	7.8	4	2.6	19	12.3

* It was assumed that students who could not be traced had quit school. In fact, the four students listed as not traceable had dropped out but their employment status was not known.

The proportion leaving school was sharply lower during the final project year, at 8.5 percent. In Year 1 the percentage of dropouts was 12.5 and in Year 2 it was 16.4.

With respect to transfers, the average annual rate was 11.7 percent.

Follow-up Reports on Previous Years' START Members

The dropout status of the 1992-93 START Project members was used as a medium-term outcome indicator. Table 6.4 displays the relevant information.

Table 6.4 - Follow-up of 1992-93 Project START Pupils

Continued in START		Attending Regular School		Quit School				Transferred or No Follow-up Possible		Total	
				Employed		Unemployed					
N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
14	25.5	-	-	7	12.7	6	10.9	28*	51.0	55	100

* 19 transferred, 4 were in jail, and 5 could not be traced, but one was known to have quit school.

Fifty-five START students were enrolled at Assumption School in September, 1992. Of this number, 14 (25.5%) continued in START in 1993-94, and 13 (23.6%) dropped out of school but 7 of them obtained employment.

External Consultants' Comments on Outcomes

Dropout percentages at Assumption School were high during the first two years of the project compared to those in the third year. During those years over one-third were attending high school and of legal school leaving age. Accordingly, compared to some other projects, this age factor would make leaving school easier. Apparently, during 1992-93, the local courts were placing juveniles on probation on condition that they attended school regularly. The condition worked well until the probation period expired. At that time the offenders left school. School retention was improved (sadly) during 1993-94 partly because four of the previous year's START group could not return since they were in jail. In addition, others were not allowed back in school.

The foregoing illustrate how non-project contextual factors can markedly influence an outcome indicator such as dropout rate. Notwithstanding the above, the relatively low percentage that left school during the third year (6.6%) supports the conclusion that the multiplicity of interventions which comprised the project was holding a significant proportion in school. The third year was carried out with far less counselling, attendance monitoring, and follow-up resources than in previous years.

Attendance changes were negative (losses) compared to the baseline years' levels during the second and third years of the project. A pronounced decline of 2.1 percent was recorded for Year 3. This last figure coincided with a marked reduction in regular staff and project staff time applied to monitoring and following up relative to poor attendance. Much of this responsibility had reverted to the Native Liaison Worker. Because the Year 1 results were quite good, and those of Year 2 occurred as expected by project staff, there is support for the conclusion that project and school staff efforts could make a difference in preventing declines in attendance as the high risk population ages.

The medium term indicator, the dropout percentage of last year's class during 1993-94, was very high. The proportion leaving school was relatively high at 19.5 percent. When this percentage was added to the percentage of their peer group that left school during the 1992-93 year the total (35.9%) is substantial. The rate, however, would likely have been much higher without the interventions provided by START.

The External Consultants share the view that dropping out of school to secure employment ought to be differentiated from school leaving with no job prospects (p.26, Provincial Perspectives Report). In contrast to other START projects, a relatively large proportion (more than one-third) left school and obtained a job.

Life Values Society, St. Paul

School: Life Values Private School

Personnel: C.L. Christensen (Principal) Project Coordinator
Counsellor/Parent Liaison/ Truant Officer
Counsellor Aide/Tutor
Secretary/Clerk/Statistician (part time)

Rationale

The Life Value which provides the underpinning for the school's programs including the START project is that human life is the most precious value in every human society. This value is manifested by the self-preservation tendency (for individuals) and the species preservation tendency (for groups).

Sub-values which support the species side of the dual life value are Love, Honour, Charity, Courage, and Truth. The self side of the dual life value is supported by these sub-values: Equality, Freedom, Order, Beauty (Aesthetics), Food, and Shelter.

To support the sub-values the school promotes and maintains the following traits: Tolerance, Industry, Emotional Control, Empathy, Rationality, Fitness, Health, Integrity, Responsibility, Self-Esteem, Confidence, and Sense of Humour.

Other beliefs, values, assumptions and guidelines of the school are enumerated by the administration as follows:

ACADEMICS: The START Project students are able to make significant academic gains when the following occurs:

a) They are in school.
b) They are not hungry.
c) They are physically active.
d) They receive individual instruction and counselling.
e) They receive positive reinforcement.

ATTENDANCE: Attendance levels can be enhanced when students have positive school experience and when staff members are available to do truancy work and provide support to parents.

ROLES OF PARENTS, GUARDIANS, AND SIGNIFICANT OTHERS: Parents, guardians, social workers, probation officers, and community counsellors are eager to work with the school to help young people.

WORK HABITS/QUALITIES: Students are able to improve their attitudes toward work and quality of their work when given adequate preparations, work opportunity, encouragement, and follow-up.

Background Factors and Characteristics of Pupils

Table 7.1 records that 21 students were identified as members of Project START at Life Values School for 1993-94. Two thirds of this group were continuing students since they were enroled as START students last year. One-third were newly enroled during the current year. Newcomers were assigned grade designations from Grade 7 to Grade 10. Twelve were boys and nine were girls.

The biographical descriptions submitted for each student in the mid-year report were similar to those of previous years. Most had been attending other schools and many had been suspended. A large number had experienced substance abuse problems and some of these were recent. Unsettled home lives were common experiences characterized by frequent moves, living with relatives or in foster homes, or a parent who frequently spent excessively on bingo and alcohol.

This school had an all-native population of pupils in 1993-94.

Table 7.1 - Enrolment and Baseline Year's Attendance of START Students

Grade	Group	Enrolment		Baseline Year's Attendance		
		No.	%ge	No.	%ge	No Data
5	Continuing	1	4.7	1	30.0	-
	New	-	-	-	-	-
6	Continuing	3	14.3	3	79.0	-
	New	-	-	-	-	-
7	Continuing	4	19.0	4	84.0	-
	New	2	9.5	2	85.5	-
8	Continuing	3	14.3	3	71.3	-
	New	1	4.7	1	36.0	-
9	Continuing	2	9.5	2	70.5	-
	New	2	9.5	2	46.5	-
10	Continuing	1	4.7	1	20.0	-
	New	2	9.5	-	-	2
All	Continuing	14	66.7	14	69.9	-
	New	7	33.3	5	60.0	2
All	All	21	100	19	67.3	2

External Consultants' Comments on Background Factors

The values, beliefs, and assumptions which made up the rationales to guide the operation of the Life Values School were uniformly upbeat and optimistic. The project and school staffs appeared to subscribe to these underlying guidelines and to behave accordingly. The external consultant has observed or seen documentation about

the actions taken by project staff concerning the rationale section labelled "Academics;" that is, absent students were brought to school, hungry students were fed, physical activity was provided daily, individualized instruction and counselling occurred, and positive reinforcement was wisely used.

It was clearly evident that the pupils selected were at very high risk for dropping out of school.

Interventions

There were five components to the intervention program, and all students received the benefits of each. In September 21 students were enrolled, but transfers and dropouts reduced the numbers as follows: October - 2, November - 3, December - 4, March - 1, April - 1.

The intervention components shown below were described and rated by the project staff.

Components

Tutoring, Individualized Instruction (To improve basic skills)

Number served - 21

Success rating - 3

In order to achieve gains in basic skills, it was postulated that students must 1) be in school, and 2) make an effort in their classes. Individual assistance/instruction/tutoring was provided as often as possible. Efforts were made to work with the home (parents/guardians) to ensure that homework arrived, got done, and was returned to school.

Most students were not in the habit of taking homework home. It was not a priority. Most of the homes were so unstable that often books got destroyed or students "camped over" at someone else's home.

Many of the students had the experience of doing very little work in school. With more individual attention they are doing more (partly because they had no other choice).

Counselling

Students served - 21

Success rating - 4

Most students came to school burdened with numerous personal

problems. A staff member usually was able to counsel a student immediately when the need arose. If necessary the student could be referred to another staff member or counselling agency (that is, AADAC, Social Services, Mental Health) without delay. Counselling the student and working with parents/guardians at the same time was more effective than working only with the student. Whenever possible as many of the student's significant others as was desirable were brought in.

Attendance Officer (To improve attendance)

Students served - 21

Success rating - 4

In order to achieve and maintain improved attendance, regular contact was made with all homes, even if attendance was good. The Student Counsellor would find and bring truant students to school. Truants received consequences for missing school.

Parents were considered the major factor in determining whether a student attended or missed school. Reasons for staying at home that were viewed as legitimate in the eyes of students and their parents included babysitting, attending a wake or pow-wow, or shopping (on days when a tax credit or welfare cheque was received). Most parents agreed that their children should have regular attendance; however, several parents allowed their children to decide if/when they attended school.

Work Experience (To improve work habits)

Students served - 21

Success rating - 5

Most students were anxious to participate in the Work Experience Program. Businesses were superb in providing opportunities, supervision, and evaluation. This component was excellent in keeping a number of students gainfully and productively employed during July and August of 1992 and 1993 and in providing an incentive to return to school in the fall.

The work experiences provided students with the opportunity to test the real world of work and to see the relevance of school work. Students received remuneration (just like in the real world). Placements were for one or two days per week for several weeks and for several weeks during the school year, and for one or several weeks during the summer vacation.

Table 7.2 displays information about the number of students and hours worked during each of school days, summer period, and evenings/weekends from July, 1993 through June, 1994.

Table 7.2 - Work Experience Program

Work Period (July '93 -June '93)	Number of Students	Average Hours Worked by Students
School Days (Sept. to June)	17	154.8
Summer (July and August)	7	86.0
Evenings/Weekends	1	125

Average hours of work experience were 154.8 for the 17 students during the September - June period. Seven students averaged 86 hours during July and August. One pupil had been employed a total of 125 hours on evenings and weekends.

Seventeen pupils were reported to have been instructed and counselled about interviews.

Contacts with Parents/Guardians/Significant Others*

Number served - 21

Success rating - 4

An effort was made to contact parents with positive messages and not just when the student was having difficulty or being a problem. It was believed that personal contacts by school staff members are of immense importance in bridging the gap between the home and school. Members of staff had regular contacts with significant adults in the lives of students. They endeavoured to get homes to initiate more contact with the school. They were encouraged to telephone or visit at any time and were invited several times a year for a meal and socializing. When staff members went to homes, in most cases parents gave the impression that they believed the school had a genuine interest in their children.

Table 7.3 records the number of contacts and the number of students for whom contacts were made during a typical eleven-day period during the fall and spring terms of 1993-94. The pattern for the current year was contrasted with an eleven-day period during March, 1991. Table 7.3 indicates an increase in contacts initiated by staff and parents and by outside agencies during the current year.

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* "Significant Others" refers to people from external agencies as well as to members of the extended family.

Table 7.3 - Contacts with Parents/Guardians/Significant Others

Item	Baseline* March '91	Reporting Period December '93	Reporting Period May '94
Number of school days	11	11	11
Total number of contacts	19	41	25
Number initiated by staff	5	16	11
Number initiated by parents/guardians	10	23	19
Number initiated by significant others	4	2	5
Number of students for whom contacts were made	11	15	8

* Baseline = first 11 days of the START Program. Other periods are 11 consecutive typical days.
** Numbers in May are reduced because of dropouts and transfers .

Between-Years Comparisons of Project Intervention

Table 7.4 reports numbers of students served, homes contacted and

Table 7.4 - Three-Year Overview of START Project Components

Interventions	Item Counted	Count by Reporting Period July '91 - June '92	July ' 92 - June '93	July ' 93 - June '94
Tutoring	Students	15	15	13
	Tutors	2	2	2
	Weeks	36	36	36
	Average time/student	34 Min.	40 Min.	45 Min.
Individual/Small Group Counselling	Students	18	20	15
	Weeks	36	36	36
	Average time/student	86 Min.	75 Min.	75 Min.
Truancy (Seek and Search)	Average truants/week found and brought to school	5	3	2
Calls to Parents/Guardians	Called at least once	All	All	All
Home Visits to Parents/Guardians	Homes visited	16	19	15
Parents Contacts in holidays	Students	11	12	10
Job Readiness	Students	20	17	17
Work Experience Placements	Students	16	17	17
	Students - school time	15	17	17
	Students -evenings & weekends	0	4	1
	Average time worked	43.6 Hrs.	65.8 Hrs.	154.8 Hrs.
	Students prepared for interviews	18	20	17

average time per student for the various components of the START Project at Life Values School. Over the three years, tutoring time was increased, counselling decreased an equivalent amount, and the average hours occupied in work experience placements increased. The latter increase was very marked, having doubled in Year 2 and tripled in Year 3.

External Consultants' Comments About Interventions

Three exemplary components of the START Project at Life Values School were Work Experience, Attendance Monitoring, and Contacts with Parents/Guardians/Significant others. These successful implementations required commitment, persistence, hard work, knowledge of networks and networking, and social skills. All of these qualities have been exhibited to a marked degree by project staff. The three components addressed areas of great need considering the families' histories regarding the world of work and their attitudes toward school and schooling.

Counselling received special attention. As indicated in the reports there were concerted attempts to deal with problems early and to involve significant adults when appropriate. Evidently skill and understanding were applied in one-on-one and in group counselling.

A very challenging area remains in providing individualized programming and instruction for students with histories of learning failures and disabilities. Features of Individualized Educational Plans and Diagnostic Prescriptive Teaching used in special education might be considered as aids in structuring this component. The time devoted to tutoring has been increased over the duration of the project in an attempt to strengthen this component. The next section (Outcomes) reports that the gains in mathematics increased markedly in Year 3 (1993-94) compared to Year 2 (1992-93). This improvement may have been due to the application of increased time and resources for instruction.

Outcomes

The outcomes reported as related to the START Project at Life Values School are improvements in average percentage of school days attended, dropouts from school, gains in academic achievement and this year's status of last year's members. The follow-up survey of the last-named group refers only to those still attending school in June, 1993.

Attendance

Table 7.5 displays the percentage of attendance for the START groups during each of the three years of the project. Improvements which are attributed to the START project components are computed as the differences between the three years' attendance percentages

and the respective baseline years' attendance.

Table 7.5 - Changes in Attendance for START Project Pupils

Year	Baseline Year Attendance Number*	%	Project Year Attendance Number	%	Net Change %
1991-92	5	75.8	5	81.3	+5.5
1992-93	13	56.6	13	71.1	+14.5
1993-94	9	75.4	9	80.1	+4.7
All	27	66.4	27	76.0	+9.6

* Number of people for whom BOTH baseline attendance and project year attendance were available AND who had completed a full year of school (dropouts and transfers were excluded).

During the third year of the project the improvement on the attendance indicator was +4.7 percent. This was considerably less than for Year 2 (1992-93) where a marked improvement of 14.5 percent was achieved. Over the three years the average attendance improved 9.6 percent. It must be noted, however, that complete attendance data were available for less than half of the START students in each year of the project.

Transfers and Dropouts of START Members

Table 7.6 gives data on pupils who transferred to another school or dropped out during the three years of the project.

Table 7.6 - Transfers and Dropouts of START Project Students

Year	N	Attending Elsewhere N	%	Quit School: Employed N	%	Unemployed N	%	Not Traceable N	%	Total* N	%
1991-92*	27	10	37.0	-	-	3	11.1	1	3.7	4	14.8
1992-93*	29	7	24.1	1	3.4	7	24.1	3	8.7	11	37.9
1993-94	21	1	4.8	-	-	9	42.9	2	9.5	11	52.4
Total	77	18	23.4	1	1.3	19	24.7	6	7.8	26	33.8

The proportion of pupils that transferred to another school declined in each of the three years. More than one-third transferred during the first year, one-fourth in the second, and fewer than one-tenth in the third year.

The overall dropout rate over three years, based on a project membership total of 77, was 26 (33.8%). After the 14.8 percent classified as school leavers during Year 1, the proportion rose sharply during the next two years: 37.9 percent in 1992-93 and

52.4 percent in 1993-94. Only one who left school was known to be employed.

Follow-up Report on Previous Year's START Members

The status of the previous year's START membership was reported at the end of Year 3 and is presented in Table 7.7. Of the 29 students involved, 7 (24.1%) continued in START, 2 left school for employment, and 12 left unemployed. Of the 8 people in the column headed "Transferred or No Follow-up Possible" 3 were transferees. One student who quit unemployed was a transferee who had subsequently left school.

Table 7.7 - Follow-up of 1992-93 Project START Pupils

Continued in START		Attending Regular School		Quit School				Transferred or No Follow-up Possible		Total	
				Employed		Unemployed					
N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
7	24.1	-	-	2	6.9	12	41.4	8	27.6	29	100

Academic Achievement

Achievement gains at Life Values School were measured by the individually administered Peabody Individual Achievement Test (PIAT). Pretest and post-test scores were available for nine pupils still in school by the end of May, 1994. Table 7.8 displays the rates of progress expressed as grade equivalents per year for each subtest; i.e., for General Information, Reading, and Mathematics. These rates are reported under two column headings: baseline (the rate of gain per year up to the time of the pretest) and project (the rate of gain per year during the membership period in Project START). The proportions of the groups that improved their rate of progress over the baseline level are reported in the column headed "% benefited from START."

Over all grades, two-thirds of the nine pupils improved their rate of progress on General Information. Seven students improved in rates of gain in Reading and Mathematics. For these subtest categories the project gains were more than double the average rates of development up to the time of the pretest.

Table 7.9 provides a between-years comparison of rates of gain in the academic areas measured by the PIAT. The most marked change during the three years of the project was the relative improvement during Year 3 in the overall rate of gain in Mathematics. During that final year, 78 percent of the START members improved their learning rate in this subject as compared to 50 percent in Year 2

Table 7.8 - Gains in Academic Achievement

Grade	Average Years in School****	Number of pupils	PIAT Basic Skill	Gain in Grade Equivalents/Year Baseline*	Project**	% benefited by START***
5	6.05	1	General Info.	0.50	0.80	100
			Reading	0.51	0.50	0
			Mathematics	0.43	1.60	100
6	6.55	2	General Info.	0.65	1.65	100
			Reading	0.56	0.95	100
			Mathematics	0.58	0.85	100
7	7.53	3	General Info.	0.51	2.27	100
			Reading	0.59	2.57	100
			Mathematics	0.63	2.13	100
8	8.55	2	General Info.	0.75	0	0
			Reading	0.58	0.60	50
			Mathematics	0.63	0.75	50
9	9.05	1	General Info.	0.93	0	0
			Reading	0.88	2.10	100
			Mathematics	0.67	0	0
All		9	General Info.	0.64	1.21	67
			Reading	0.60	1.49	78
			Mathematics	0.60	1.24	78

* Baseline = Grade Equivalent divided by years in school (one month = 0.1 years)
** Project Rate = Grade Equivalent gain divided by portion of the year between testing periods
*** Percentage Benefited = Percentage of students with project rate exceeding the baseline rate
**** Average Years in School = Average number of years in school up to the time of the baseline pretest

and 69 percent in Year 1. Except for Mathematics in Years 1 and 2, the Project rates of gain were maintained at double or higher than the baseline levels.

Table 7.9 - Gains in Academic Achievement over Three Years

Year	Pupils	PIAT Basic Skill	Gains in Grade Equivalents Per Year Baseline	Project	Increase*	% Pupils Gaining
1991-92 (Year 1)	16	General Information	0.60	3.93	3.33	81
		Reading	0.73	1.81	1.08	81
		Mathematics	0.64	0.72	0.08	69
1992-93 (Year 2)	14	General Information	0.66	1.66	1.00	79
		Reading	0.59	1.77	1.18	64
		Mathematics	0.62	0.32	- 0.30	50
1993-94 (Year 3)	9	General Information	0.64	1.21	0.57	67
		Reading	0.60	1.49	0.89	78
		Mathematics	0.60	1.24	0.64	78

* Increase = Project-year rate of gain minus expectation (baseline gain per year), see footnote to Table 8 in Provincial Perspective Final Report.

External Consultants' Comments About Outcomes

During the third year of the project the attendance outcome did not show the very marked improvement achieved in the previous year. There was, however, significant improvement (4.7%) of about one day per month over the baseline average. Over three years the average attendance improvement was over 10 percent or two days per month. Since increasing declines in attendance are expected of high risk pupils as they get older this improvement over the baseline rate (recorded when they were younger) merits a commendation.

Dropout proportions rose during the second and third years of the project. These relatively high proportions may well be related to the very high degree of risk for dropping out which characterizes the group. Substance abuse, broken homes, unstable family and living arrangements, alcoholic parents, fetal alcohol syndromes and expulsions from other schools are all background conditions which occurred with relatively high frequency for this group (compared to other START Project groups). Without acceptance at Life Values School many would simply not be in school. For many, Life Values is the school of last resort. The preponderance of these attributes within the group support the conclusion that the project has prevented a significant number of dropouts.

The intermediate term dropout indicator was the follow-up data on the status of last year's START members. More than one-third and one half had dropped out during 1992-93 and 1993-94, respectively. From a positive perspective, two-thirds and one half remained in school. As with the other outcome attendance and dropout indicators, without non-START comparison group information, conclusions about the impact of the project remain equivocal.

Academic achievement gains as measured by the PIAT indicated a positive impact for most students. This conclusion seems warranted even though selection biases were operating since only those remaining for the complete year could be included for post-testing. Over three-fourths of the students improved their rates of learning over three years of the project.

In reporting at year-end the Project staff at Life Values School offered some carefully considered conclusions and recommendations. The External Consultant agrees with and supports these. They are enumerated below in condensed form.

1. The role of the home

   Since the stability and the influence of the home are of paramount importance in getting pupils to attend school and stay enrolled, visible and tangible pressures need to be exerted; for example, a) financial - discontinue family, youth, and welfare benefits for non-attendance and poor attendance, and b) provide educational choices - offer

alternative programs. Educational needs cannot be met with a single kind of program (for example, more and improved work experience is needed). A broader range of choices may help students learn to be self-providing and not the other way around.

2. The role of social/community agencies

   Better inter-agency communication, cooperation, and coordination needs to replace the isolated contributions that currently prevail, including those of the criminal justice system.

3. The role of work experience

   The value and satisfaction experienced from employment is often totally unknown to this type of student. Often no role models exist within the extended family. For long-term benefits a high quality work experience, beginning as early as age twelve, is one of the most attractive alternatives available.

4. Financial incentive to stay in school

   Getting paid for regular school attendance is analogous to getting paid for reliable and regular performance as an employee.

5. The goal of Grade 12 for all

   For pupils who are quite incapable of achieving a high school diploma (for example fetal alcohol effect, behaviour disorders, severe learning disability) such a long term objective is clearly unrealistic. The alternative should be to prepare them for the world of work where they can contribute to society and not be a burden.

County of Smoky Lake No. 13

Personnel: Supervisor - Bart Eisen, Director of Student Services.
Carolyn Aney - Counsellor at H.A. Kostash School
Nancy Murphy - Counsellor at Vilna School

Schools - H.A. Kostash School
Waskatenau School
Vilna School

Rationale

Four Guiding Principles within which the transactions were framed for the County of Smoky Lake dropout prevention program were listed as follows:

1. Student centredness.

2. Individualization based on individual needs and circumstances.

3. Flexibility. Continual monitoring, periodic evaluation and a sincere sensitivity to students will facilitate identifying problems and making adjustments.

4. Community-wide participation.

Background Factors

Identifying students for placement in the START Project has been a major undertaking in the County of Smoky Lake. A number of criteria are employed, and the staff is sensitized to students who have problems, as well as how to deal with them.

Background Characteristics of Students

Table 8.1 shows the START Project enrolments broken down by grade, school and group. The figures indicate that there were 52 students enrolled in 1993-94. This was a decrease from the number in the previous year (68) and from Year 1 (60). Other changes from earlier years were also evident. At H.A. Kostash school no new students were enrolled in the project in 1993-94; however, the number of pupils decreased by only 6 (from 33 in 1992-93 to 27 in 1993-94). This would indicate that a number of students were continuing beyond the second year. At Vilna the enrolment went from 35 to 23, a drop of 12, despite the fact that 14 new students were placed in the program. At Waskatenau the two students who were in Grade 8 in 1992-93 (and they were continuing from 1991-92) went on to Grade 9 and continued in the Project.

Table 8.1 - Enrolments and Baseline Years' Attendance of START Students

School	Group	Grade	Number	%	Baseline Year Attendance Number	%	No Data
H.A. Kostash (N = 27)	Continuing	8	8	29.6	7	88.0	1
		9	2	7.4	2	78.0	-
		10	5	18.5	5	89.0	-
		11	7	25.9	6	95.4	1
		12	5	18.5	4	90.5	1
	New	7 - 12	-	-	-	-	-
Vilna (N = 23)	Continuing	8	3	13.0	3	95.8	-
		9	3	13.0	3	93.0	-
		10	3	13.0	2	93.3	1
		11	2	8.7	2	97.1	-
		12	3	13.0	3	89.4	-
	New	7	4	17.4	4	95.4	-
		8	3	13.0	3	77.5	-
		9	-	-	-	-	-
		10	1	4.4	1	79.7	-
		11	1	4.4	1	83.7	-
		12	-	-	-	-	-
Waskatenau (N = 2)	Continuing	7 - 8	-	-	-	-	-
		9	2	100	2	96.5	-
	New	7 - 9	-	-	-	-	-
All (N = 43)	Continuing	8	11	25.6	10	90.3	1
		9	7	16.3	7	89.7	-
		10	8	18.6	7	90.2	1
		11	9	20.9	8	95.8	1
		12	8	18.6	7	90.0	1
		All	43	100	39	91.2	4
All (N = 9)	New	7	4	44.4	4	95.4	-
		8	3	21.8	3	77.5	-
		9	-	-	-	-	-
		10	1	11.1	1	79.7	-
		11	1	11.1	1	83.7	-
		12	-	-	-	-	-
		All	9	100	9	86.4	-
All (N = 52)	All	All	52	100	48	90.3	4

External Consultants' Comments About Background Factors

The number of START students decreased, especially those in the New group. The reduction resulted from the fact that no new students were placed in the program in the fall of 1993 in H.A. Kostash School because of the likelihood that the START Counsellor would not be retained after the end of March, 1994.

Baseline year attendance averaged 90.3% for all of the students for whom data were available. For the Continuing students the average was 91.2%, well above the 86.4% average for the New students.

Interventions

The interventions described below were in place at H.A. Kostash School and in Vilna school.

Components

Descriptions, including strengths and weaknesses, and ratings of the components, submitted by the START personnel, are given below.

Peer Support

Students served - potentially all, actual number not reported

Overall Rating - 4

Peer Support was designed to encourage students to assist themselves and each other in the decision making process. The concept of peer support encourages the development of responsible independence and a positive personal and group identity. Many different activities were developed and implemented under this component. These activities created opportunities for students to use experiences actively and intentionally to gain new levels of confidence and competence. The students were encouraged to use the resources available within the peer group to develop skills and manage difficult situations. Students were encouraged to involve the peer group in identifying and meeting their own needs, developing their skills necessary for personal success and applying their knowledge to all situations.

Strengths

1. Encouraged student responsibility for his/her own decisions
2. Students developed awareness of their own strengths
3. Provided students with the opportunity to become actively involved in the development of life skills
4. Provided an avenue for the development of a strong, positive group within the school
5. Provided a vehicle to focus on topics or issues or special interest to teens (for example, suicide)

Weaknesses

1. Traditional methods did not work well when the school transience level was very high.
2. Students who were considered to be at risk often did not have the extensive communication skills that were needed to participate in this program.
3. The effectiveness of this type of group was progressively developed over a significant period of time.

Mentoring

Pupils served - 27

Overall Rating - 4

Mentoring was designed to initiate and maintain contact between a student who was considered to be at risk and a person who could be supportive and understanding. The "Mentor" was a volunteer who had interests similar to those of the student.

Strengths

1. Individual students were given an opportunity to interact with successful, caring people who could share ideas and dreams.
2. Students benefited by being able to make concrete connections between class work and the work world.
3. Students were provided with the opportunity to recognize their own strengths and weaknesses.

Weaknesses

1. It was difficult to match mentors with students.
2. Stability in each match was very important. When the student population was transient, maintenance of the program over a long term was difficult.

Building Successes

Pupils served - All

Overall rating - 5

This component was designed to create an awareness of the premise that "Success Builds Success." This awareness was needed by all of the major stakeholders in the education of students. Activities were designed to assist parents, students, teachers, business people, and all other people in the community who were concerned with the welfare of children.

Strengths

1. An active awareness of the difficulties facing youth was developed.
2. Building Successes promoted an awareness of the need for active community involvement in the education of all students.
3. All stakeholders developed an ownership of education by creating ways for them to become actively involved in it.
4. Students who had been recognized for daily success developed a greater level of self-confidence and were more willing to take risks.

Weaknesses

1. Attitudes tend to change over a long term, therefore, measurable results were not readily available and a greater reliance on anecdotal information was required.

Career Education and Information

Students served - All

Overall rating - 5

Students were encouraged to develop career plans. They were assisted to understand that career planning was a life long process. Students were encouraged to develop the skills necessary to succeed in the work world. Various activities and experiences were provided to enable them to do this. Practical experiences were provided whenever possible.

Strengths

1. Students were encouraged to assess their current skill level.
2. Students developed an understanding of the career choice process.
3. Students developed an understanding of transferable skill.
4. Students came to understand that skill development and knowledge were equally important in the educational process.
5. Through the planning process, students recognized the link between education and their futures.
6. Students became active participants in the work world through research activities and observation.
7. Students were encouraged to do personal action planning.

Weaknesses

1. Job market information, current job trends, and specific job information was often difficult to obtain.
2. Active parental involvement, by providing practical experiences for the student, was often not available.
3. In a small community, practical experiences were not readily available, therefore time and money were required to make this more effective.

Work Exposure

Pupils served - 23

Overall rating - 5

This component provided students with the opportunity to observe and participate in a work setting. Community businesses provided students with this opportunity for various lengths of time and

through a variety of opportunities. Participation by students was dependent upon their needs.

Strengths

1. Students were given an opportunity to evaluate an occupation on the basis of real experience.
2. Students developed an awareness of the skills and knowledge that an employer expects.
3. Students were allowed to experience the relationship between formal education and work.
4. Involvement in this component emphasized the importance of the "Building Successes" component and provided non-school personnel with the opportunity to become involved in the education of students.

Weaknesses

1. Small communities generally provide only limited opportunities for students.
2. Academic commitments (timetabling) limited the number of students who could become involved in this component.
3. Transportation to and from worksites was not always present.

Work Placement

Pupils served - 39

Overall rating - 5

This component provided students with the opportunity to spend extended periods of time in the workplace. Employers spent time with students, teaching them the skills necessary to be successful on the job.

Strengths

1. Students were able to gain meaningful experience on the job.
2. Through long term exposure to the workplace, students were encouraged to develop an understanding of skills and knowledge necessary to be successful.
3. Students were provided with the opportunity to develop skills that enhanced their academic learning.
4. Successful completion of this component provided them with a reference for work.
5. Successful students, in some cases, were offered part-time or summer employment.
6. Students were able to continue through the other work placement programs such as Work Experience, Co-op Education, and Registered Apprenticeship Program.

Weaknesses

1. Small communities, such as those in the County of Smoky Lake, do not provide the variety of worksites that may be available in larger centres.

2. Academic commitments (timetabling) limited the number of students who could become involved in this component.

Counselling - Individual and Group

Pupils served - all

Overall rating - 5

Individual and group counselling was provided to assist students in developing attitudes and skills that would help them to become successful in school and in the work place.

Strengths

1. Students were encouraged to assess their own strengths and weaknesses.
2. Students were provided with information that will enable them to make better decisions.
3. Students had the opportunity to experience personal growth within a safe environment.
4. Students were able to develop communication, decision-making, and goal setting skills, through practice in a safe environment.

Weaknesses

1. Individual and group counselling were long term.
2. Attitude change did not always show measurable results over the short term.
3. The level of trust required for this component developed over time.

School Wide Assistance Team (S.W.A.T.)

Pupils served - All

Overall rating - 3

This component was designed to provide teachers with a peer group to assist them in providing a better learning environment for all children. Volunteers who were willing to share their expertise with their colleagues provided the basis for the group.

Strengths

1. Created an avenue for teachers to receive assistance from their colleagues in a supportive environment.
2. Teachers were provided with different points of view, in a discussion format, that allowed them to assess what they had been doing, and to evaluate and modify their classroom techniques within a supportive environment.

Weaknesses

1. The development and implementation of this aspect was ongoing.
2. There was sometimes an unwillingness to consider all options available when dealing with student behaviour and learning.

Inservice

Pupils served - All

Overall rating - 5

This component was designed to provide teachers, parents, and community members with the opportunity to increase their awareness of the needs of students. This component was intended to help people who dealt with students to develop new skills necessary for them to become actively involved with meeting the needs of pupils who are at risk.

Strengths

1. Awareness created a need for action. With more people becoming involved with students, there was a greater chance that the needs of individuals would be met.
2. School staff members and community members were able to share ideas, therefore creating a more cooperative learning atmosphere for students.
3. Students who were afforded the opportunity to attend conferences, benefited from the interaction with other students.

Weaknesses

1. Scheduling joint activities was often difficult, owing to time constraints.
2. A shortage of funding prevented ongoing inservice activities.

Liaison with Families

Pupils served - All

Overall Rating - 4

This component was designed to increase communication between parents and the school staff. Parents were encouraged to become participants in the education of their children.

Strengths

1. Parents were encouraged to support their children in all academic endeavours.
2. Parents and students came to realize that education was an ongoing activity.
3. Parents became involved in their child's success.

Weaknesses

1. Parental involvement was a new experience for some parents.
2. Contact with parents was sometimes difficult (for example, no telephone).
3. Dysfunctional family environments sometimes prevented the involvement of the significant parent.

External Evaluators' Comments on Interventions

The most direct and solid interventions were those provided to the students by the counsellors. In addition, these people provided the energy and organization to keep the various components active. As one principal stated, "They are the engines that drive the START Project." Other interventions, beamed at the students in a general way, or at the staff, were not readily evaluated; for example, School-Wide Assistance Team, Career Information and Education, and Liaison with Families. The Work Exposure component was slow to develop, but did manage to involve a significant number of students before the year ended. The SWAT component was unsuccessful, in the opinion of the external evaluator. The number of students referred to the SWAT team so that a teacher could receive advice and assistance was negligible. This was not surprising because teachers generally regard a formal request for assistance with a problem student as an admission of incompetence. If assistance is to be given to teachers some other format must be devised.

The effectiveness of the various components depended largely upon how receptive the staff members were to the activities they were involved in, and the degree to which students reacted to the indirect treatments. The principals report that the cooperation of staff was very good and that there was very little resistance to the extra effort needed. They also reported that, overall, the START Program had made teachers more sensitive to the special needs of students, and more willing to give needed assistance.

The START Project in the County of Smoky Lake was drastically overbuilt in terms of the human resources available. A parallel situation would be using a Chev 350 engine to power a Boeing 727.

When one looks at all of the interventions that are listed, and realizes that these are to be conducted (with some assistance, of course) by two counsellors, it becomes apparent that some of the activities must receive minimal attention. The far-ranging duties that are claimed include Liaison with Families (available to all students), Individual and Group Counselling (available to all students), providing Career Information and Education (for all), instructing and overseeing Mentors and Peer Support people, and coordinating activities of the School Wide Assistance Team. No two counsellors, however competent they might be, could do justice to such a wide range of tasks.

Another problem resulted from the insistence that the identity of the START students be kept secret. The subterfuge actually limited the attention given to project students because many additional people had to be served along with the targeted students. While helping extra students was a worthy activity, it detracted from the main purpose of the project which was to assist the START group.

Outcomes

Attendance

Table 8.2 shows the percentage of attendance for the START students for the baseline year and for the 1993-94 school year. The most noticeable feature of the table is that, for every group, the attendance declined as time went on. This would not be a matter of great concern if the attendance had been high, that is, well over 90 percent, but in only one case, the Vilna Continuing group, was the 1993-94 attendance better than 90 percent. This level of attendance is minimal at best, considering that about 3 students in a class of 30 would be missing each day, or that every student would miss about two days every month. This rate of absenteeism would no doubt hinder the progress of the students.

Table 8.2 - Changes in Attendance for START Project Students

School and Group		Number of Students Total	N/A	Attendance (%) Baseline Year	1993-94	Change
H.A.Kostash	Continuing	27	3	87.3	86.4	- 0.9
	New	-	-	-	-	-
Waskatenau	Continuing	2	-	96.5	88.8	- 7.7
	New	-	-	-	-	-
Vilna	Continuing	14	2	93.5	92.8	- 0.7
	New	9	-	86.3	84.6	- 1.7
All	Continuing	43	5	89.7	88.6	- 1.1
	New	9	-	86.3	84.6	- 1.7
County Total		52	12	89.1	87.8	- 1.3

* N/A = Baseline attendance not available, OR student transferred, OR student withdrew during the year.

Table 8.3 shows attendance figures for the START Project students over the years from fall, 1991 to spring, 1994. The general trend was for changes in attendance from the baseline year to the project year to be declining. In Year 1 there was a gain of 1.8 percent in attendance, but in the subsequent years there was a loss of 4.1 percent and 1.3 percent. Overall, there was an average loss of 1.3 percent over the three years.

Table 8.3 - Changes in Attendance for START Project Pupils

Year	Baseline Year Attendance Number	%	Project Year Attendance Number	%	Net Change %
1991-92	50	87.7	50	89.5	+1.8
1992-93	56	91.6	56	87.5	- 4.1
1993-94	40	89.1	40	87.8	- 1.3
All	146	89.6	146	88.3	- 1.3

Transfers and Dropouts

Table 8.4 shows that, during 1993-94, one student transferred and two quit school, one of whom went to a job.

Table 8.4 - Transfers and Dropouts of START Students During 1993-94

School	Group	Attending Elsewhere N	%	Employed N	%	Quit School Unemployed N	%	Status unknown N	%	Total N	%
H.A.Kostash	Continuing	-	-	-	-	1	3.7	-	-	1	3.7
	New	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Waskatenau	Continuing	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
	New	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Vilna	Continuing	1	4.3	1	4.3	-	-	-	-	2	8.7
	New	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
All Schools	Continuing	1	1.9	1	1.9	1	1.9	-	-	3	5.8
	New	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
County Total		1	1.9	1	1.9	1	1.9	-	-	3	5.8

Percentages are based on the number of students involved as follows: H.A. Kostash - 27, Waskatenau - 2. Vilna - 23.

Table 8.5 indicates that only a few START students dropped out during each of the three school years. The zero dropout rate for 1991-92 is misleading because the START students were not identified until the second half of the school year. It is likely that potential project students had already quit school by the time the group was selected.

Table 8.5 - Transfers and Dropouts of START Project Students During the School Year

Year	N	Attending Elsewhere		Quit School							
				Employed		Unemployed		Not Traceable*		Total	
		N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
1991-92	60	6	10.0	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
1992-93	68	2	2.9	2	2.9	5	7.4	1	1.5	8	11.8
1993-94	52	1	1.9	1	1.9	1	1.9	-	-	2	3.8
Total	180	9	5.0	3	1.7	6	3.3	1	0.6	10	5.6

* It was assumed that all students who were not traceable had quit school

Table 8.6 paints a different picture than the one provided by Table 8.4. The latter table suggests that the three schools all had very stable populations; however, Table 8.6 indicates that Vilna's group of students tended to be volatile. While only a few students moved during the school year, about half (14 students, or 48.3%) transferred between May 31, 1993 and May 31, 1994. The greater tendency of people in the Vilna area to move was mentioned as a general problem by the principal during an interview.

Table 8.6 - Follow-up of 1992-93 Project START Pupils

School	Continued in START		In Regular School		Dropped out				Transferred		Total	
					Employed		Unemployed					
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
H.A. Kostash	26	83.9	1	3.2	-	-	2	6.5	-	-	31*	45.6
Waskatenau	2	100	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	2	2.9
Vilna	14	40.0	1	2.9	-	-	2	5.7	18	51.4	35	51.5
All Schools	42	61.7	2	2.9	-	-	4	5.9	18	26.5	68	100

* Two students (2.9%) graduated. They were not included in any of the other columns.
** The 1992-93 group consisted of 68 students, of which 19 transferred or dropped out during the school year (see Table 8.5); however, 3 of these students returned to the START program in September, 1993.

External Evaluators' Comments on Outcomes

Effects of the START project conducted in the County of Smoky Lake were mixed. On the positive side, the dropout rate was low, as evidenced by both Table 8.4 and Table 8.5. Only 2 students dropped out in 1993-94, and 4 of the 1992-93 group had quit by the end of May, 1994. Also, two of the 1992-93 students graduated from high school, which was rather rare among START students. On the negative side, the attendance figures were disappointing. As noted earlier, all of the changes from the baseline year to 1993-94 were negative, and a comparison with the figures for previous years, (Table 8.2) shows that the percentage attendance for the START

students stabilized near 88 percent.

It is possible that the Smoky Lake START project has run its course. The greatest contribution was, perhaps, sensitizing the staff to the group of students who struggle in school, and this aspect was achieved, as far as it was practical to do so. The task of providing real assistance to this group fell to the counsellors, whose efforts were spread thinner and thinner as time went on. After the end of March only one counsellor remained, and predictions were that this situation would continue in 1994-95. One counsellor cannot be expected to organize the various activities encompassed by START in three widely separated schools.

Schools as large as H.A. Kostash and Vilna require counselling services for their students. Tying this essential function to the START project was unusual in that it was dependent upon special grants that could disappear at any time. If nothing else, this evaluation has shown that there is a substantial number of students in Smoky Lake county schools who need the support and assistance that counsellors are capable of providing. A reduction in this service will have a negative impact on students who need special attention.

Some of the more successful components might be kept in place at much reduced levels of effort and funding. Some of the ones that deserve attention are: Building Successes, Career Information and Education, and Teacher Inservice because they might be organized on a casual basis, with a rotation of the duties among staff. Other aspects that require more funding, such as Work Exposure and Work Placement might be arranged so that specific plans are made and funding requested from the County. The matter of adequate counselling, however, cannot be met on a casual basis. This, in the opinion of the external evaluator, is the most serious problem.

Edmonton Catholic School District No. 7

Personnel: Ken Lesniak - Director, School of Continuing Education
Irv Krasanoski - Supervisor in Charge
Chris Diachuk - Consultant, Counselling Services
Flo Reducka - START Teacher
Steve Bouska - START Teacher
Marcus Hauke - START Teacher (Funded by ECSD No. 7)
John Fiacco - Tutor (Funded by ECSD No. 7)
Lisa Reeves - Tutor (Funded by ECSD No. 7)

Location: Edmonton YMCA

Name: Project Fresh Start

Funding Provided in Year 3 - $71,729

Rationale

The Edmonton Catholic School District Fresh Start program was intended to assist young people who had left school but wished to resume their formal education. Many of these people would find it awkward or very difficult to return to a conventional school. Some have been out of school for several years, some are from out-of-province, some are recent dropouts (or push outs), and some do not function well in a large-school situation. These potential students were perceived to be in need of activities that promote social, physical and academic growth. The foundation of the program consisted of core academic courses in Mathematics and Language Arts, and optional courses in Physical Education, CALM, Work Experience, Occupations, and Personal Living Skills.

The main philosophical thrusts were, first, that this should be a transitional program leading to the return of students to a more conventional stream, whether in school or society in general. A second thrust was that each student should be treated as an individual, work at his/her own pace, and work in a positive learning situation. Third, an open door policy with respect to attendance was to be maintained. Success of the program depended upon developing relationships between staff and students, and amongst students, rather than upon externally imposed expectations and the negative consequences of not attending. Raising the education levels in small steps, developing self-esteem in students, and providing an educational setting where students want to come should eventually lead to long term self-sufficiency.

Background Factors

There were a number of programs operating at the YMCA, and as a result contact was made with many young people. Some of these people, because of their perceived needs, were referred to the

Fresh Start project. Other agencies, including both Separate and Public schools, also referred dropouts (or pushouts) to the special program. Approximately 80 students were in this program (named the Fresh Start Project), and from these a group of about 30 was selected in the fall of 1993 and labelled as START students. This smaller group, primarily, was the subject of the evaluation; however, some data and judgments given relate to the larger group.

The Fresh Start group was unstable in that students frequently attended for a time, then returned to regular school classes. Also, students were admitted to the program throughout the year if and when space became available.

As of January 15, 1994, 29 students had been identified as the START group for purposes of study and evaluation. Table 9.1 shows the enrolment by grade and group of these students at mid-year and year-end, and of the total Fresh Start group at year end.

The primary criteria for placement in the Fresh Start Program were unchanged from the previous year; that is, the students had dropped out but they were willing to continue schooling in a modified setting. The selection criteria were applied to the students who were referred by the various agencies.

Background Characteristics of Pupils

Table 9.1 shows the enrolment figures in the fall of 1993 and the spring of 1994 for the START Project and the Fresh Start program conducted by the Edmonton Catholic School District.

Table 9.1 - Enrolment of START and Fresh Start Pupils

Designated START Students						All Fresh Start Students Registered at Year-End			
		Fall		Spring					
Grade	Group	Number	%	Number	%	Grade	Group	Number	%
10	Continuing	2	6.9	-	-	10	Both	45	51.7
10	New	16	55.2	8	53.3				
11	Continuing	2	6.9	2	13.3	11	Both	34	39.1
11	New	8	27.6	5	33.3				
12	Continuing	-	-	-	-	12	Both	8	9.2
12	New	1	3.4	-	-				
All	Continuing	4	13.8	2	13.3	All	Both	87	100
All	New	25	86.2	13	86.7				
All	Both	29	100	15	100				

The most important indication in Table 9.1 was that approximately half (51.7%) of the START students stayed in the program until the end of the year (this percentage was about the same for both Continuing students and New students). The figures also indicate

that there were 8 Grade 12 Fresh Start students in the program at the end of the year, but that the lone Grade 12 START student had left the program by year-end.

External Consultants' Comments About Background Factors

A significant change from 1992-93 was that there were no Grade 9 START students in 1993-94, and that there were no students in the "ungraded" category which was employed in 1992-93. Another change was that there had been a modest increase in the number of continuing students. Last year there was only one.

Placement in the Fresh Start program was a result of assessments and discussions. The group was kept at approximately 80 students. There was a waiting list of students that was used to fill spaces left when students left the program during the year. The number of designated START students was 30 at the beginning of the year, of which 29 were in attendance at mid-year. By the end of the year the number had dropped to 15.

Interventions

Procedures varied from one-on-one and small group instruction to those involving large groups made up of START students and others. Credit courses followed Alberta Education curricula, and in some cases used Distance Education lesson materials. Completed lessons were marked by the students' instructors, and all of the examinations were prepared and scored by these people. Table 9.2 is a summary list of the project components which shows the number of Fresh Start students served in each during 1993-94.

Table 9.2 - Project Components and Enrolments

Project Component	Students
Mini Teaching Units	80
Physical Education and Recreation	32
Career Education	80
Work Experience 15 and 20	8
Special Projects 10, 20, and 30	120
CALM 20	85
Personal Psychology 20	20
Personal Living Skills	9
Art 10 and 20	5
Computer Programs (Autoskill, Literacy Tutoring, Academic Upgrading, Study Skills, PLATO)	6

Descriptions and ratings of the components, submitted by the Fresh Start personnel, are given below.

Components

Mini Teaching Units

Students served - 80

Overall Rating - 5

The purpose of this component was to provide social and personal awareness of the world around us. This involved field trips, guest speakers, workshops, and some volunteer services. The various segments that made up the component are listed below, along with an evaluation (on the same scale used to judge the components) of each. The segments were generally well received and will be repeated next year, except as noted. Also listed are the volunteer activities and the special events.

Segments

1. Library orientation - 4
2. Environmental issues and recycling - 4
3. Driver education - 5
4. Stay-in-school campaign - 5
5. Post-secondary information and visits - 5
6. Healthy/unhealthy relationships/dating game & violence - 5
7. Drinking and driving - 5
8. Native culture - 5
9. Multiculturalism - 5
10. Anger management - 5
11. AIDS awareness - 5
12. Space sciences centre - 5
13. Blood donor clinic - 3
14. High school tours (St. Joseph's High) - 5
15. NAIT open house - 5
16. Speakers from the world of work - 5
17. Math blasters - 5
18. Citadel Theatre - 5

Volunteer Activities

1. Provincial Museum - 5
2. Festival of trees - 5
3. Toxic roundup - 5
4. Storyland Valley Zoo - 2 (not to be repeated)
5. Marian Centre - 5
6. Bissell Centre - 5
7. Children's festival - 5
8. Moshfest - 5
9. Pitch-in Canada - 5

Special Events

1. Christmas Dinner - 5
2. Tropical day - 5
3. Pancake breakfast - 5
4. Street performers festival (indoors) - 5
5. Halloween party - 5
6. Picnics - 5
7. Pizza lunches (rewards for courses completed) - 5
8. Fundraisers for trip to mountains - 5
9. Spring lawn cleanup - 5

Physical Education and Recreation 10, 20

Students served - 32

Overall Rating - 5

This unit provided Physical Education and Recreation for high school credit. Activities in recreation were designed to build self-esteem, promote group cooperation and general mental health. Physical Education was taught 3 days per week from 2:00 - 3:00 PM in the YMCA gym. The Alberta Education curriculum was followed. Special Recreation was offered twice monthly, and included the following activities (an evaluation is shown opposite each):

1. In-line skating - 5
2. Canoeing - 5
3. Mountain biking - 5
4. Skateboarding - 2 (not to be included next year)
5. Camp Warwa activities - 5
6. Elk Island Park day trip - 5
7. Cross-country skiing - 4
8. Downhill skiing - 5
9. Wheelchair basketball - 5
10. Footbag - 2 (not to be included next year)
11. Bowling - 5
12. Billiards - 5
13. Skating - 4
14. Broomball - 5
15. Gladiators - 5
16. Day-long bike trip - 5
17. Five-day cycling trip from Jasper to Banff - 5
18. Disc golf - 4
20. Wall climbing - 5
21. Hoopfest - 5

Comments by teachers

Students of various ability levels were able to participate in Physical Education and Recreation. Many improved their skills and it is hoped that life-long recreational enjoyment will be the

result. Students looked forward to the activities throughout the year. Most of the activities will be repeated next year and plans include addition of a tour of city hall, visit to the legislature, and a tour of the Edmonton Journal.

Career Education

Students served - 80

Overall Rating - 4

Assisting students with exploration of careers and the world of work was the purpose of this component. The CHOICES program was on site for student use, along with materials for self assessment, information provided by all post-secondary institutions for regular admission and non-matriculated adults, student for a day program at Grant McEwan Community College and NAIT, job search techniques, resume writing, filling out application forms, job shadowing, and job club.

Comments by teachers

The students did a good career exploration with all the activities that took place during the year. The "Choices" program was a valuable tool. The publication "It's About Time" was very useful for learning about institutions and occupations. Speakers from the world of work provided good information. There was success in every area except for job shadowing. Most students were not confident enough to make their own arrangements to spend "on the job" time. They needed to have that set up for them. Next year a staff member will make the arrangements and whenever possible take them to the site. More work in job search was needed.

Work Experience 15, 25

Students served - 8

Overall rating - 2

Students were placed in a work experience setting which provided practical experience in the work place. This was preceded by career search, exploration and job shadowing. Three or five credits were awarded, depending upon the number of hours spent in the workplace.

Comments by teachers

Though a very small number of students (4) completed work experience, those who did gained practical experience and earned important references from their supervisors. Much work has already been started and much remains to be done in order to have the program serve many more students. The downtown area has been

canvassed and information packages have been delivered to the various businesses. Some merchants have already committed themselves to accepting a work experience student, and others are deciding. The plan is to have many worksites by late September.

Special Projects 10, 20, and 30

Students served - 120

Overall rating - 5

Students could accumulate hours for special projects in a variety of ways. Some examples were: volunteer work, individual study or project, and combining hours from mini-teaching units with other activities such as Recreation. Three or five credits were earned, depending upon the hours accumulated.

Comments by teachers

Most students completed a special project for 3 or 5 credits. They took part in numerous activities and projects. Their hours were carefully logged and charted so that they could compare with their own records. The students kept the staff on their toes. If an hour or two was not added quickly enough, the teachers were reminded. This component worked very well. It gave students a realistic goal to work toward, in terms of credits. When students assumed a leadership role, they were rewarded for their initiative. This component will continue unchanged next year.

CALM 20

Students served - 85

Overall rating - 5

The Alberta Education curriculum was followed using Distance Education materials. Students worked independently, with assistance provided as required. Students met as a group for special workshops and guest speakers.

Comments by teachers

Students were able to work through each unit independently and with little difficulty. The curriculum challenged the students to analyze and deal with personal and social issues. The material was interesting and students were well motivated to work to completion. Next year more workshops and guest speakers will be introduced into the program. This will add interest and provide another dimension to the course.

Personal Psychology 20

Students served - 20

Overall rating - 4

The purpose of this component was to give students an understanding of the factors that contribute to personality and behaviour, both their own and those of others. The nature of intelligence, perception, and the influence of heredity and environment were also discussed. Distance Education materials were used, along with supplementary materials. Three credits could be earned.

Comments by teachers

Though students laboured through the course, they found the material interesting. It was very long and difficult in some chapters. For next year the number of exercises in each chapter will be reduced and some of the supplementary material will be replaced with audio-visual material to reduce the work load.

Personal Living Skills 10

Students served - 9

Five modules were offered:
Resource Management
Child Study
Human sexuality
Living on your own
Community services for children

The Alberta Education curriculum was followed, using Distance Education materials with some substitution from other sources. Students met once a week in two-hour sessions and received instructions in a group.

Art 10 and 20

Students served - 5

Overall rating - 2

Distance Education materials were used to teach Aspect of Design, Drawing, Painting, Calligraphy, Cartooning, etc. Art history and appreciation were also part of the program. Field trips to the art gallery and other galleries were incorporated into the course. Three or five credits could be earned.

Comments by teachers

This course did not lend itself well to individual study and it was very difficult for individuals to finish projects. More focus has

to be placed on group work. Tile painting and chalk art were successful. Next year a weekly workshop/session will be introduced to help with the focus. Gallery visits will also be a part of the program. Only 3 students completed Art 10, although several started and did some very good works.

Computer Programs (Autoskills, Literacy Tutoring, Academic Upgrading, PLATO), and Study Skills Workshop

Students served - 6

Overall rating - 2

Remedial assistance was provided for students who were achieving below their grade level. Focus was placed on improving English and Mathematics skills in preparation for high school courses. Improving reading skills and gaining new strategies for learning were stressed.

Comments by teachers

The Autoskills program, overall, was not successful. It is not recommended for independent student work. A literary tutor needs to be working with the students. Reading 10 will be introduced as a component next year to replace Autoskills. Math games on the computer were helpful in improving skills. Students responded well. Study skills workshops taught note-taking, mindmapping, and exam writing. Ten hours of study skills workshops were presented to a group, two hours every day for a week. This was well received by students. This aspect will be repeated next year.

External Consultants' Comments on Interventions

The interventions were selected on the basis of the needs of students as perceived by planners, and on the interests of the students. The length of the list of mini-teaching units gives evidence of the effort invested in preparing topics that would be of interest and value to students. Placement in the program was a result of assessments and discussions.

The various interventions were conducted in a relaxed manner where the emphasis was on helping students to grow. Each student, in consultation with staff members, set goals to be achieved. Progress was monitored and discussed with the student, and if headway was not being achieved changes were made. If the student was not serious about the work, or could not invest the necessary time for one reason or another it was sometimes suggested that he/she should leave the program to make room for someone else. Students who left were invited to return to Fresh Start in the future when personal problems had been ironed out.

The external consultant concurs with the component ratings given.

Outcomes

Attendance

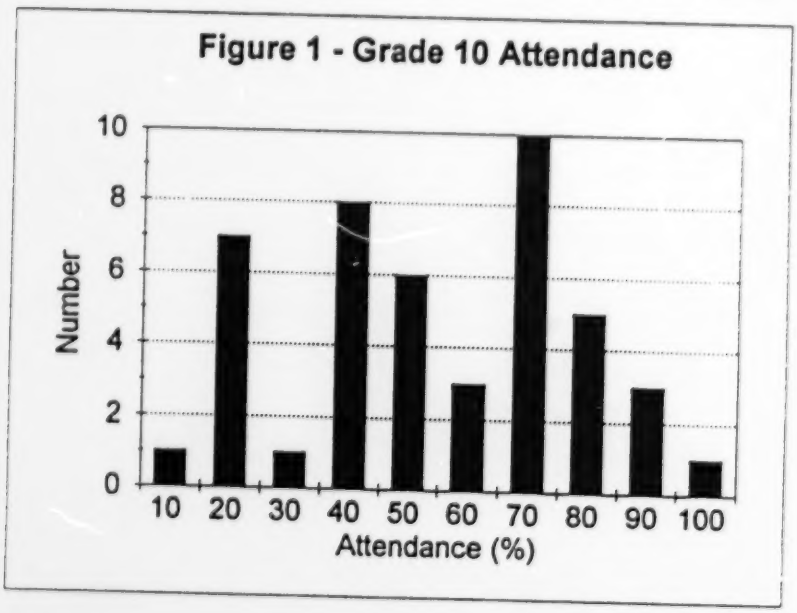
Attendance figures for both the baseline year and 1992-93 were available for only 4 of the START students. This deficiency was caused, first, by the fact that 14 of the 29 START students transferred or dropped out during the year, and, second, by the lack of information on previous years for many of the students. Although the data are trivial, they are presented in Table 9.3.

Table 9.3 - Percentage of School Days Attended

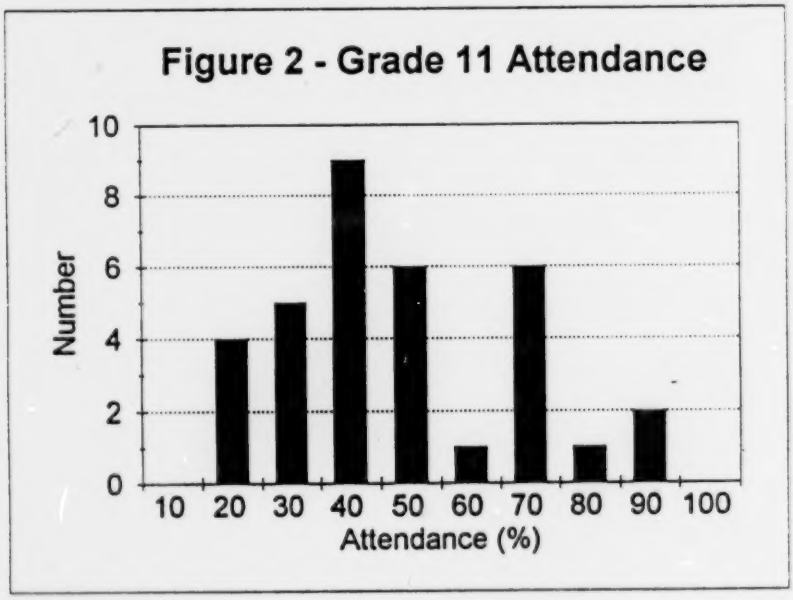
Group	Number of Students Total	N/A	Baseline Year (%)	1993-94 (%)	Change (%)
Continuing	4	2	22.0	37.5	+15.5
New	25	23	62.0	62.0	0.0
Both	29	25	42.0	49.8	+7.8

The table reveals a marked improvement in attendance by the continuing group; however, the 1993-943 figure of 37.5% was still low.

Attendance, for the Fresh Start students was not of primary importance because the students were essentially in a distance education (correspondence school) situation. If they completed their lessons at home, without difficulty, a very important objective of the program was being achieved. The program rationale also mentioned that there would be an open door policy with respect to attendance. The lack of pressure to attend is reflected in Figure 1, 2, and 3, which show the attendance distributions for all



of the Fresh Start students in each of Grade 10, 11, and 12. The rate of attendance for only a few students would be considered satisfactory in a regular school situation. It must be mentioned, however, that attendance was a factor in many cases. Each student had a contract to perform up to a certain standard and for some, a level of attendance was specified in the contract. Some of the low attenders were NOT meeting their requirements.



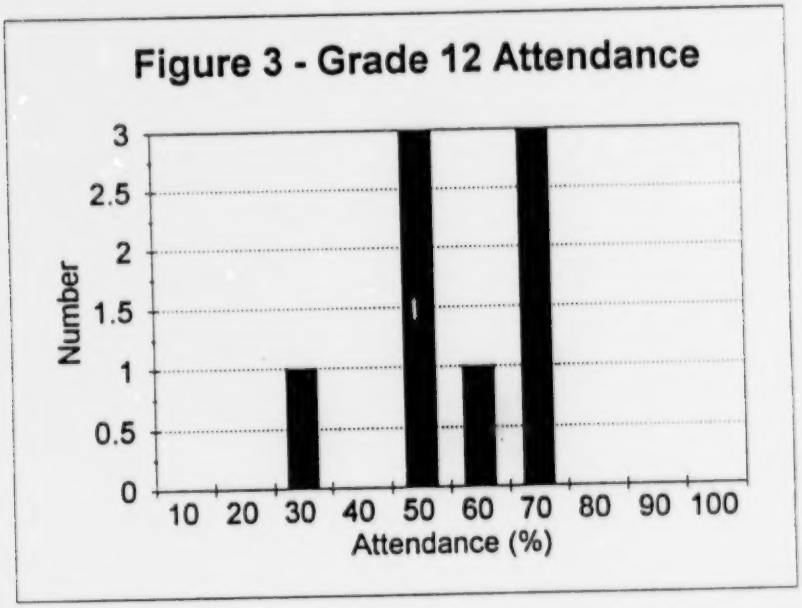


Table 9.4 shows that, overall, there was an improvement in attendance from baseline years to project years; however, it must be mentioned that the numbers are based on only a few cases for whom data were available. The table also shows that the actual attendance over the years was low, and that the trend was downward. Part of this was the result of the way in which the program operated, with greater emphasis being placed on completing lessons.

Table 9.4 - Changes in Attendance for START Project Pupils

Year	Baseline Year Attendance Number*	%	Project Year Attendance* Number	%	Net Change %
1991-92	16	77.6	18	75.1	- 2.5
1992-93	12	43.9	12	61.2	+17.3
1993-94	4	42.0	4	49.8	+7.8
All	32	60.5	34	67.2	+6.7

* These attendance figures applied to the period March 1 to June 30, 1992, only.

Transfers and Dropouts

Table 9.5 shows the transfer and dropout figures for the 1993-94 school year. Half of the students who left the START group transferred to other schools, most of which were in Edmonton.

Table 9.5 - Transfers and Dropouts of START Project Students During 1993-94

Grade	Group	Attending Elsewhere N	%	Employed N	%	Quit School Unemployed N	%	Status Unknown N	%	Total N	%
10	Continuing	1	3.4	-	-	1	3.4	-	-	2	6.9
	New	4	13.8	-	-	2	6.9	2	6.9	8	27.6
11	Continuing	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
	New	1	3.4	1	3.4	-	-	1	3.4	3	10.3
12	Continuing	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	
	New	1	3.4	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	3.4
All	Continuing	1	3.4	-	-	1	3.4	-	-	2	6.9
	New	6	20.7	1	3.4	2	6.9	3	10.3	12	41.4
All	Both	7	24.1	1	3.4	3	10.3	3	10.3	14	48.3

Data on the Fresh Start students were provided by the school system, but there was no breakdown by grade and group (Continuing and New). The list below gives some details on 79 students who left the Fresh Start program during 1993-94.

Attending elsewhere - 15
Moved away, not known if attending elsewhere - 16

Left and employed - 8
Left and unemployed - 3
Left and probably unemployed - 31
Dismissed from the program - 6

It must be borne in mind that the list shows students who LEFT the program and were subsequently replaced by others. The TOTAL number of Fresh Start students, therefore, was more that 150.

Table 9.6 shows data for transfers and dropouts over the three years of START. There was a distinct shift in the pattern of transfers (Attending Elsewhere) in 1993-94). In Year 3 seven students transferred to regular schools, mostly in Edmonton, while in Year 1 and 2 the only "transfers" were students who went to jail. Over the years, only 2 students left to take employment, while 4 left unemployed. The total number of dropouts from the START group over the three years was 12 (14.8%).

Table 9.6 - Transfers and Dropouts of START Project Students

Year	N	Attending Elsewhere		Quit School						Total**	
				Employed		Unemployed		Not traceable			
		N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
1991-92	22	1*	4.6	1	4.6	1	4.6	-	-	2	9.1
1992-93	30	3*	10.0	-	-	-	-	3	10.0	3	10.0
1993-94	29	7	24.1	1	3.4	3	10.3	3	10.3	7	24.1
Total	81	11	13.6	2	2.5	4	4.9	6	7.4	12	14.8

* Went to jail.
** It was assumed that students who were not traceable had quit school

Follow-up of the 1992-93 Fresh Start Pupils

Table 9.7 shows the results of a follow-up of the students registered in the Fresh Start Project in 1993-94. The number of

Table 9.7 - Follow-up of 1992-93 Fresh Start Pupils

Continued in Fresh Start		Attending regular school		Quit School				Transferred or no follow-up possible		Total	
				Employed		Unemployed					
N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
5	6.1	35	42.7	4	4.9	1	1.2	37	45.1	82	100

students who continued in the special program is small (5, or 6.1%); however, there were a few who commenced a second year in Fresh Start who subsequently withdrew for one reason or another. One example is the lone student listed as having quit school and being unemployed. She actually attended until late February, 1994, then withdrew to have a baby. Table 9.5 also shows that 35

students (42.7%) were attending regular high school classes, and that only 5 (6.1%) were known to have left school. For 37 (45.1%) students no follow-up information was available. Only 3 of these people had moved away from Edmonton, while the remaining 34 could not be traced. The likelihood was that most of these students had dropped out of school.

External Consultant's Comments on Outcomes

Outcomes information from this project was meagre because of the nature of the students as well as the program being offered. There was difficulty with any measure involving information from previous years because many of the students came from other school districts, and several had been out of school for a number of years. Attendance data were of little real use, follow-up information was difficult or impossible to acquire in most cases, and data on achievement changes were not collected because of lack of relevance to the types of students served. Despite this, it can be said that the results were encouraging. A substantial proportion of students returned to regular school and met with success, and a number managed to pick up high school credits while in the START program. Many students, therefore, were helped who otherwise would not have returned to school to improve their education.

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APPENDIX 1

REPORT FORMS

Background and Attendance of Students School or Jurisdiction _____

Date Submitted _____ START: new ___ START: continuing ___

List of Students	Age on Sept. 1, 1993	Reached age 16 during 1993-94 (✓)	Grade on Sept. 1, 1993	% of days attended in baseline year*	% of days attended in 1993-94**	Change in % attendance	Dropped out/ Transferred in 1993-94

Column no. 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8

* Baseline year for NEW students is 1992-93, for CONTINUING students it is 1990-91 or 1991-92.

** Report attendance for those who completed the school year, and leave blank for students who dropped out.

Please use separate sheets for New and Continuing students

Background and Attendance of Students School or Jurisdiction _____

Date Submitted _____ Comparison: new ___ Comparison: continuing ___

List of Students	Age on Sept. 1, 1993	Reached age 16 during 1993-94 (✓)	Grade on Sept. 1, 1993	% of days attended in baseline year*	% of days attended in 1993-94**	Change in % attendance	Dropped out/ Transferred in 1993-94
Column no.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8

* Baseline year for NEW students is 1992-93, for CONTINUING students it is 1990-91 or 1991-92.

** Report attendance for those who completed the school year, and leave blank for students who dropped out.

123 Please use separate sheets for New and Continuing students. 124

INTERVENTIONS

Staff Report on START Components for '93-'94, Page __

School or Jurisdiction _____

Name of component: _____

_____

Overall success rating (1 is low, 5 is high) 1 2 3 4 5 N/A

Number of pupils served through this component _____

BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THIS COMPONENT

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

COMMENTS ABOUT THIS COMPONENT (e.g. strengths, weaknesses, changes needed, future plans, others besides students served)

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____ (Attach another sheet if necessary)

WHEN DID THIS COMPONENT BEGIN IN YOUR SCHOOL _____

Form completed by _____ Telephone: _____

Report on Dropouts and Transfers School or Jurisdiction _____

1993-94 year end Date Submitted _____ START: new ___ START continuing ___

List of Students who transferred or dropped out	Transferred out			Quit School			Comments
	Attending elsewhere	Later quit school	Status not known	Employed	Unemployed	Status not known	
TOTALS							

Column no. 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8

Total Dropouts (total of columns 5, 6, and 7) _____ Dropout Rate (Total Dropouts + Total number of START students) - _____

Transferred and attending ___ Transferred and quit ___ Transferred and attendance status unknown ___ Total transfers ___

Please use separate sheets for START New and START Continuing students.

Report on Dropouts and Transfers School or Jurisdiction _____

1993-94 year end Date Submitted _____ Comparison: new ___ Comparison: continuing ___

List of Students who transferred or dropped out	Transferred out			Quit School			Comments
	Attending elsewhere	Later quit school	Status not known	Employed	Unemployed	Status not known	
TOTALS							

Column no. 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8

Total Dropouts (total of columns 5, 6, and 7) _____ Dropout Rate (Total Dropouts + Total number of START students) - _____

Transferred and attending ___ Transferred and quit ___ Transferred and attendance status unknown ___ Total transfers ___

Please use separate sheets for New and Continuing students.

Follow-up Report on 1992-93 START Students

School or Jurisdiction _____ Status as of May 31, 1994

Please respond using check-marks. One should appear opposite each student's name.

List of Students	Transferred out after June, 1993	Continued in START in 93-94	Regular program in 93-94	Quit School since June 30, '93			Follow-up not possible
				employed	unemployed	Status not known	